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EDITOR'S LETTER



Country COMFORTS

Bring the essence of the English countryside to your home with a set of Connie bedlinen, priced from £99 for a double duvet cover from Christy. **0845 758 5252, christy-towels.com**



The merry month of May brings a feeling of hope and renewal. This is the time to be kind to yourself when it comes to fresh starts and major changes, especially at home. I advise you to pick one project for your home and give it your best shot rather than spreading your energy thinly. I hope you will rejoice in our splendid Country and Vintage special from p103, packed

with ideas on how to make this timeless look your own. Our reader homes show the cream of classic interiors in England and France, and will put you in a holiday mood from p22. Look out for new ways with monochrome on p86 and enjoy the latest trends from p65 in Style Edit.

Susan Dickerson

EDITOR

*This month Period Ideas has been: getting away from it all on a **RURAL RETREAT** in Dorset; enjoying new fragrances from **YANKEE CANDLES**; preparing for AW15 press previews; admiring new collections of **GARDEN FURNITURE** and looking forward to the **HAY FESTIVAL**.
What could be better than a town brimming with books?*

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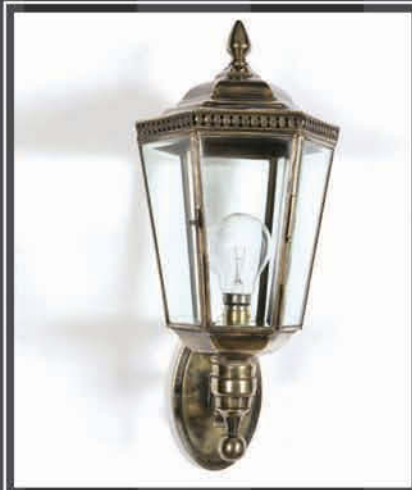
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SEE PAGE 136 TO SUBSCRIBE TODAY

Pay just £6 for your first three issues of *Period Ideas* with free delivery direct to your door. Classic inspiration for your home and garden all year long.

MAY'S ESSENTIAL SHOPPING LIST

HOME STYLE

Keep up to date with the latest designs and happenings this month



SHINE BRIGHT

This Clayton utility pendant light, available from £40, is perfect for bringing some retro style into your home. Its pressed metal surface features a detailed pattern, and it comes in a stylish duck-egg blue painted finish. Call 03332 008 009 or visit lauraashley.com to find out more.



FIRED UP

Get set for warm summer evenings with these pretty tea-light holders from Betty Jackson. Black at Debenhams. These tinted glasses emit a gentle glow when lit and are perfect for creating a soothing vibe indoors and out. To find out more, call 0844 800 8877 or visit debenhams.com

GARDEN GLORY

With the picnic season in full swing, make sure your garden-table is dressed to impress with Inga Lukauskienė's classy collection of table linen. There's a wealth of lovely linenware available at the interior designer's online shop, as well as bedding, throws and clothing in this flattering fabric. 020 8133 3853, linenme.com



THE HOT SEAT

Occasional chairs are taking the interiors industry by storm, and Cuckooland is offering a modern twist on this classic piece of furniture. This luxury velvet tub chair in blossom fabric is available in six glorious shades, and is perfect for bringing a splash of colour into a bedroom or study. 01305 231 231, cuckooland.com



HIGH STYLE

The new collection from Very harnesses fresh spring hues and bright summer tones for a truly uplifting look. This snug seat, in duck-egg Cindy fabric, is priced at £249 and is also available in natural and pink, to complement a range of décor schemes. 0844 822 2321, very.co.uk





POWER PRINTS

Urban Road's variety of vivid and elegant artwork, such as this breathtaking Hint of Spring canvas, is sure to make a statement in any interior scheme. Head to urbanroad.com.au to view this and more striking pieces.

GET GROWING

Put your green fingers to good use with quirky garden accessories from Dotcomgiftshop. With this cute miniature greenhouse, you can create a charming botanical display in your home, or grow your own handy herb supply from scratch in your kitchen.

020 8746 2473,
dotcomgiftshop.com



DIARY DATES

From 9th May and throughout the summer months, No. 1 Royal Crescent in Bath will be hosting an extraordinary exhibition of the Small Worlds historic dolls' houses and miniature furniture, made in the 18th and 19th centuries. These amazing objects have never before been put on display, and now you'll be able to enjoy them with admission to the museum. To find out more, visit no1royalcrescent.org.uk

TRENDY TRAYS

Decorative trays are a top trend for the summer, and this striking enamel tray in bold raspberry features deep dimensions and practical handles, making it a useful addition to your abode.

0845 548 0210, annabeljames.co.uk



BLOOMING MARVELLOUS

Breathe new life into your home with fresh flowers, displayed in Berry Red's beautiful range of opal vases. There's an assortment of shades, styles and sizes available, so call **0845 450 3937** or head to berryred.co.uk to browse the stunning selection.

Decorating with... **INDUSTRIAL STYLE**

From metallic accents to reclaimed wood, discover how to bring a contemporary look to your period home

Edited by **SEOANA SHERRY-BRENNAN**

Grey washed trestle dining table,
£450, Rose & Grey.
0161 926 8763,
roseandgrey.co.uk



Now that cosy winter days are over, we start to crave a change in our interiors. Just as the warmer weather dictates that we shed layers of clothing, so too can our homes benefit from shaking off some of the decorative layers they have accumulated. It's time to welcome in a pared-back palette and embrace sleeker, more minimalist designs.

STRIKE A BALANCE

The industrial trend developed when factories that reigned supreme during the Industrial Revolution went out of business. These abandoned buildings were remodelled and transformed into large, open-plan living spaces. Bars and restaurants then began to embrace exposed brick work, rustic wooden furniture and steel fixtures in their establishments, and interior designers and homeowners now use industrial elements in residential properties, for décor which is both stylish and functional.

It may seem like a contemporary look, but industrial is in fact a perfect balance between vintage and modern design. You don't need a vast loft space to channel the trend, nor do you have to strip your home of its classic period features. In fact, vintage furniture and accessories are key - have a rummage around your local salvage market or antiques fair for original and eye-catching pieces.

MATERIAL WORLD

Weathered wood, cool metals and upcycled pieces create a well-worn, homely vibe. Exposed brickwork and pipework, which may once have been a home fashion faux pas, are now highly sought after. Good news if you have such elements, but potentially tricky and costly if you don't. If uncovering years of paper and plasterboard doesn't appeal, there are a range of fantastic wallpapers which replicate the look of brick, wood and many other textures.

Another crucial part of industrial style is the lighting. Choose metal pendant fixtures, enamel shades or put the focus back on the bulb and keep them bare. There are a variety of quirky, decorative bulbs available to buy, which have shaped filaments designed to act as a feature, rather than just to illuminate your space.

GOLDEN Rules

Interior stylist and designer Sophie Robinson shares her tips and ideas for creating the industrial look in your home:

- Choose mineral hues for walls, such as shades of grey, inky blues, plaster pinks and greens.
 - Layer up the look with raw textures - think scaffold planks, concrete, exposed piping, bare brick and wooden floors.
 - Use metallic highlights to lift your scheme. Copper is the metal of choice at the moment, but chrome, brushed steel and brass are also good options.
 - Accessorise with an iconic bare Edison style light bulb or pendant lighting. You can find original pendant lights in reclamation stores or pick up good-quality replicas from the high street.
 - Contrast rough and smooth textures, for example, a luxe velvet sofa, a polished marble surface or a cut glass chandelier.
- sophierobinsonstylist.wordpress.com

Tea light holders, £6; vases, from £14; candles, £18; candle holder, from £28; cushions, from £28; basket, £40; throw, £60, all Betty Jackson. Black at Debenhams. **0844 800 8877**, debenhams.com

SWATCH WATCH

Colour your walls with one of these stylish hues from Ecos Paint, as a basis for your industrial themed décor.

01524 852 371,
ecospaints.com



STORES WE ADORE

Discover vintage and reclaimed pieces to channel industrial style in your abode at one of these top shopping spots:

Rockett St George Our go-to online destination for industrial style seating (rockettstgeorge.co.uk)

Alexander & Pearl If you're on the hunt for living furniture and storage, this is the place to bookmark (alexanderandpearl.co.uk)

Occa-Home We love the recycled pieces on offer here, particularly the boatwood dresser (occa-home.co.uk)

Grey floral bath mat, £14; grey floral bath towel, £16, both Next. 0333 777 8000, next.co.uk

Online Inspiration

For more industrial style ideas, head to pinterest.com/periodideas and browse our latest board, where you'll discover tons more ways to use this bold look in your interiors.

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OUTDOOR IDEAS Best buys

Site to see

Since acquiring a neglected, overgrown allotment in 2012, Rich and Nick have blogged about their outdoor experiences at twothirstygardeners.co.uk. Packed full of advice, you're sure to pick up a few tips you can use in your own garden.



Spotty seat pad, £20; woven check throw, £95; floral four-person hamper, £110, all Dickins & Jones at House of Fraser. 0345 602 1073, houseoffraser.co.uk

Bloom of the month LILY OF THE VALLEY



We take a closer look at the official flower for the month of May.

Symbolising sweetness and humility, this low-growing woodland plant has white, bell-shaped flowers, and is found across Europe, Asia and North America. Its most notable feature is its delicate fragrance, which has inspired perfumers in the creation of scents for centuries.

It thrives in moist, shady spots, and will gradually spread to form

dense clumps of lush green foliage. The cute little flowers will bloom in late spring, alongside bright orange berries.

Looks can be deceiving so beware – the pretty plant is highly toxic, to defend itself against animal attacks. The stems, leaves, flowers and berries are all poisonous, and can cause blurred vision, vomiting, headaches and a whole host of other unwelcome and unpleasant symptoms.

Plant power

Kew Gardens has revealed where its research will be focussed in coming years

Plans include digitising its vast collection of plants and fungi, performing a health check of the world's flora and hosting an MSc course in taxonomy. During the last 255 years, Kew has built up an extraordinary collection of dried and living plants, and the team at Kew is now considering how this fantastic resource can be used to address global questions, with a focus on climate change, food and fuel security, poverty, disease and ecological scarcity. As well as research, Kew is also planning some exciting new initiatives for the public, including a children's plant festival.

Seasonal shopping Garden Journal

The latest news, inspirational ideas and expert advice for your great outdoors

SHOW TIME

For cutting-edge gardening design, new plants and ideas aplenty, don't miss this year's edition of the world's most prestigious planting event, the RHS Chelsea Flower Show. Regular visitors will be pleased to know that Prince Harry's charity, Sentebale, will be exhibiting a garden for the second time, designed by Matt Keightley, who was behind the Help For Heroes garden at last year's show. There will also be collaborations from Laurent-Perrier and Chatsworth, marking the stately home's debut at Chelsea. The show attracts over 150,000 people each year and tickets sell out quickly, so call **0844 338 7502** or visit rhs.org.uk now to purchase.



Perfect performance

Make sure your garden furniture is equipped to handle the temperamental British weather with EXTEX fabric. This innovative material is made in Britain and combines

a luxurious feel with advanced yarn technology, so it is water repellent, stain resistant, and machine washable. All of these qualities make it the ideal choice for outdoor furniture, and will ensure that your exterior furnishings will last for many seasons to come. Seen here is Haze, a classic non-chenille plain cushion, available in azure, maize and steel, priced £72 each, from LuxDeco. **020 3586 1536, luxdeco.com**

RETAIL THERAPY

Bring the outdoors in with these pretty floral home accessories



TAKE NOTE

Keep track of your gardening calendar in this painterly journal, £9.95, Annabel James. **0845 548 0210, annabeljames.co.uk**



CUT A RUG

Add a fancy touch to your flooring courtesy of a vibrant rug, from £815, Frith Rugs. **0845 490 0600, frithrugs.co.uk**



FIT LIKE A GLOVE

Make cooking a special occasion with a gorgeous oven glove, £12, Wealden Fairs. **01580 713 915, wealdenfairs.com**



TEA TIME

The sunny hue of this Orla Kiely mug will certainly bring a smile to your lips, £9, One Brown Cow. **01980 626 420, onebrowncow.co.uk**



VINTAGE STYLE

Browse your seed catalogues in comfort on this pretty cushion, £98, Beadesert Ltd. **0845 838 8720, beadesert.co.uk**

BRANCHING Out

Claire Holmes shares her tips on getting your plants out of the greenhouse and into the plot



EXPERT ADVICE

CLAIRE HOLMES is the acting editor of *Grow Your Own*. For more growing tips and ideas, pick up the next issue, on sale 2nd April.



"The garden is bursting into life this month, and the sound of birds singing and bees buzzing will provide a wonderful backdrop to all of your jobs on the plot. Seeds will be slowly unfurling, young plants stretching into growth and fruit flowers blooming.

There's plenty of sowing, planting and general maintenance tasks to be getting on with, and some of us may even be enjoying the first asparagus spears or lettuce leaves of the season. One of the key jobs for many growers will be transplanting indoor-raised seedlings to the garden. This can be done when the risk of frost has fully passed (which is usually around mid-May), but only after you have acclimatised your seedlings to the outside world. These tender

young plants will be so used to the warmth and protection of your kitchen windowsill or greenhouse that the cool temperature and harsh conditions outdoors can cause them to shrivel and wilt. Getting your plants used to their new surroundings is a process known as hardening off. Place them outside in a sheltered spot for a few hours a day, bringing them in at night when temperatures plummet. Slowly increase the time they are outside over a period of 10-14 days, until they are ready to be left out all day and night. This procedure allows the waxy cuticle of the plant leaves to thicken and means that the sun and wind won't have such an impact on their growth – and all your tender, loving care won't have been in vain!"

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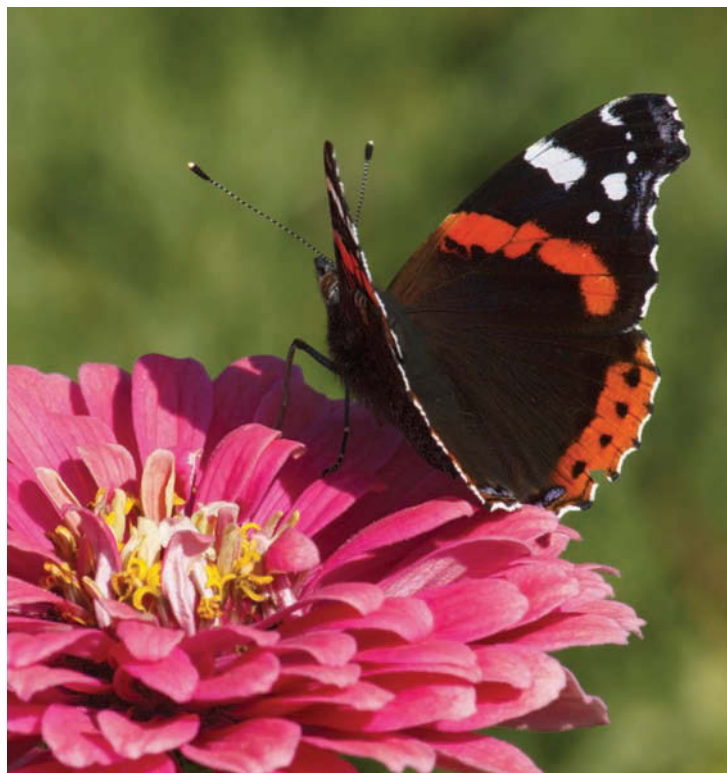
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GARDEN GOSSIP

Sarah Raven

The queen bee of the British gardening scene reveals her planting advice for the month and shares a fantastic offer with you

May is the month to sow two of my favourite plants – zinnias and basil. They find our grey skies and high levels of rainfall a challenge, but sown in the next couple of weeks, they will grow well. By now, the worst of the cold nights should be over and light intensities are rising by the day. If it's warm enough for you to be outside in the evening and into the night, it's warm enough for zinnias and basil to be out there too.

Zinnias famously hate root disturbance, so direct sow two or three seeds, into freely drained soil, 4-5 cm apart at 30cm spacing. Find them a sunny corner, and give them plenty of water, in the morning, not at night. They're particularly prone to damping off and botrytis, from the moment of germination all the way through their life cycle. In a damp, cool year, with high air humidity, plants can get a plateau of mould which sits on the growth tip and rots down into the heart of the plant. You

can use a fungicide such as Bordeaux mixture to prevent this, but full sun and good drainage at their roots will help.

The same rules apply to basil, which is best sown in the next few weeks in a sunny spot with a fine tilth and good drainage. Basil likes its nights mild and its roots moist. Sow it at the same spacing as the zinnias and then thin out, so you end up with one plant every 30 cm or so. If you're in a part of the country where supper outside is a once a year experience, then opt for the window-ledge, greenhouse or polytunnel instead.

If you want to keep your plants growing quickly, keep them well-watered, again dousing them in the morning, not in the evening. If basil leaves are damp, slugs and snails will have a great feast in the dark, so your plants are best left dry overnight. This will also help discourage basil's tendency to succumb to mould.

It's also worth knowing how to pick basil leaves. Don't just grab a handful – as you would with mint or parsley. Pick with scissors, cutting out whole sections of a plant to a pair of leaves lower down the stem. Cutting here will promote the formation of axillary buds. These will become the next generation of leaves for you to eat in a week or two. If you snip off the tips, you're left with an ugly stump and mould is more likely to strike. This can then rot back down into the rest of the plant and kill it. A careful layered haircut is what is needed rather than a simple straight swipe.

Sarah Raven has been running cooking, flower arranging, growing and gardening classes at her East Sussex farm since 1999, and has presented on BBC Gardeners World. She also has her own website, where you can purchase flowers, seeds, kits and view a full list of courses, sarahraven.com

Reader offer

Get 20% off Zinnia and Basil seeds, plus many other great varieties for sowing in May by visiting sarahraven.com and quoting offer code **PD15MAY**.

Offer ends 31st May 2015. Offer is only valid online and cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. 20% discount can only be claimed against seeds. For full terms and conditions visit sarahraven.com/terms-and-conditions



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ESSE

Period Ideas celebrates the best in British interiors

When it comes to cooking al fresco, splendid summer barbecues with succulent sausages and burgers sizzling on the grill are the first thing that come to mind. The only problem is having to wait for the warmer weather to come around, but thanks to ESSE, there's no need to cease your outdoor activities when summer ends. The new Fire Stone stove will have you wining and dining in the elements all year round – whatever the weather or season.

This outdoor oven is the latest innovation from master stove manufacturer, ESSE. The company has a rich history dating back to the 19th century, when its founder, James Smith, was born. By the time James was 16, he had ten brothers and a sister to contend with, and was eager to embark on a career of his own. He moved to New York and gained an apprenticeship as a metal worker, which led him to set up his own business in Jackson, Mississippi in 1841. Years later, with a wife and five children of his own, James returned to Britain and brought his metal work company with him, making ESSE stoves. He introduced these new creations to the wealthy Victorian market in Edinburgh and the company soon grew to be a huge success, thanks in part to its on-trend French name.

Today, the creators at ESSE are focussed on harnessing the power of wood-fired cooking in its products, believing strongly in the unique properties of this method. The Fire Stone is an outdoor wood-fired oven, with a 360 degree pivot feature that allows the orientation to be adjusted,

even during use. It cooks delicious home-made pizzas in minutes, and is equally impressive at roasting, baking, braising and chargrilling. It requires minimal maintenance and features a glazed door, so food can be observed during cooking and air flow to the fire can be regulated. With the door closed, higher oven temperatures can be achieved, or you can keep the door open for less intense wood-fired cooking.

Chef-patron, Nigel Haworth, is in no doubt about the extraordinary qualities it brings to the food. "Innovation is such a vital part of our whole approach to cooking and it is very rare to find it from an oven manufacturer, so it's really refreshing," he says. "It may seem strange that chefs actually step out into the open to cook for diners in our restaurants, but it really does work. It's not just thinking outside the box, it's thinking outside the kitchen," continues Nigel. And he's not the only chef to be taken by this new device. Professional cooks at Northcote, the luxury hotel and restaurant in Lancashire, are using the oven as part of their top-notch food service, while every Ribble Valley Inn around the country now has one installed.

ESSE's outdoor oven is just one of a whole range of cookers and stoves that are hand-built at its factory in Barnoldswick, where traditional materials and craftsmanship are combined with modern technology for advanced safety and fuel-efficiency. With a Fire Stone from ESSE, you can indulge in food-fuelled festivities at any time of year, for a truly rich cooking experience.

It's not just thinking outside the box, it's thinking outside the kitchen

There's no doubt that Yorkshireman Adam Black, has retail in his blood. His grandfather, Peter Black, founded Peter Black Holdings in Keighley in the 1940s, and this company became one of Britain's largest suppliers of shoes, handbags and gift packs to Marks & Spencer, Tesco and Next. After a solid grounding in fashion retail, Adam has spent the past decade in interiors, setting up Feather & Black, a bedroom furniture retailer in 2001. His latest venture is Button & Sprung, which celebrated its first birthday last November. "My belief is that the alternative to Amazon and Ebay is the guy who is the very best at what he does," he says.

My favourite room is...

my bedroom. We have a huge upholstered divan, with a luxurious mattress and there's nothing quite like the feeling of climbing into a freshly made bed and settling in under our super-soft Hungarian geosedown duvet. I wish I could bottle the moment.

The thing I like best about my house is...

the space. We are lucky enough to have a home with enough room to be able to find a quiet corner to read the papers in relative peace and quiet.

When I'm at home I like to...

listen to the sound of the sea. Our house is situated on the seafront and I believe there is something buried deep within an Englishman's DNA that craves the sound of the waves and the feel of a sea breeze.

My favourite place in Britain is...

Yorkshire. I grew up in the Dales and if I was offered a weekend anywhere in the British Isles I would head deep into James Herriot country.

My favourite thing to cook is...

Sunday breakfast for my four boys, a full fry up! I am much better at it than my wife, Louise, imagines and the boys enjoy it. It's also a chance for Louise to have a lie-in.

When I'm decorating a room I always...

pay close attention to what Louise says.



The best advice I had was obsess about your customer, not your competition

Although I work in the interiors industry, our home is very much my wife's domain. She has a fabulous eye, a distinctive style and great taste.

My inspiration comes from...

all over the world. I love what some of the US brands are doing and I spend lots of time online researching new ideas. Trends tend to repeat themselves. When I first started out, the emerging trend was for Shaker style cabinets and I would look for inspiration in Heal's back catalogues, from the 1920s and '30s, and at the National Art Library, in the V&A museum.

The secret of my success is...

I have always worked with products. I religiously 'walk' the shops, read all the glossy magazines and trawl websites. You get a good sense of how tastes change and the trick is to take your customers there at the right time. Too early and you're ahead of them and they disconnect, too late and you've missed the boat.

If I could make over anyone's home in the world it would be...

a large rock star residence in Mustique. A few months on site in the Caribbean looks very attractive right now.

The current interiors trend I love most is...

'midcentury modern'. *Thunderbirds* meets *The Graduate* – what's not to like?

I think the next interiors trend will be...

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John and Angela's historic tower house is typical of the fortified homes in this medieval village, in the Tarn region of southwest France.

TOWER TRANSFORMATION

ANCIENT

Angela and John Goodwin found their dream home



Angela was eager to let the architectural features of the property stand out and, as such, the living room is full of rural charm.

HISTORY

in a hill-top village in the south of France

Words **MANDI MILLER/CHILLI MEDIA** Photography **ASHLEY MORRISON/CHILLI MEDIA**



Above Angela combined neutral tones with rustic outdoor textures, such as the large stone fireplace and natural wooden beams in the center of the living room.

Atop the rolling hills of Cordes sur Ciel, in the Tarn region of France, sits an elegant 15th century manor house. Centuries ago, this French village was unrecognisable as the stunning rural retreat it is today, suffering the impacts of national warfare and political turmoil. But with its troubled past far behind it, John and Angela were able to immerse themselves in the French way of life and make their retirement dream a reality.

As they began researching the area, the couple became fascinated by the rich history of the village and were thrilled to discover that its hospitable culture was a long-standing trait. Cordes sur Ciel was founded in 1222 during the turbulent years of the Albigensian Crusade, by Count Raymond of Toulouse. Originally, the village functioned as a bastide - a place to shelter people who were displaced by the ongoing war. The village was built to protect people from conflict, and it was these intrinsic cultural values that appealed to John and Angela when they decided to relocate here.

WARM WELCOME

With such a colourful past, it's no surprise that the village is brimming with tall tales and legendary stories. One such fable goes that damsel in distress, Dame de Magot, was imprisoned by her wicked husband, Baron de Magot, for having an affair with a dashing young captain. Trapped in a nearby dungeon, the captain valiantly escaped and rescued the dame in true fairy-tale style. But this iconic story isn't the only relic residing in the village. Original architecture still remains thanks to the local artisans who worked painstakingly to restore and maintain it, providing a unique snapshot into medieval life.

The friendly residents and imaginative tales enriched John and Angela's experience of relocating. A far cry from the danger and dungeons of the past, the village is now a sunny haven for the Goodwins and locals alike. "Historically, it is very important, with a long legacy of surrounding fortified villages and Les Chateaux," says Angela, who was enchanted by the property and its detailed past. In keeping with the



Below The wonderful refectory-style table and wall units were made by a local craftsman, who was able to capture the style of the property perfectly.



Left The bespoke kitchen was made locally to fit the unusual circular contours of the tower. Although small, it's designed to maximise storage and be user friendly.

REAL HOMES Medieval makeover



village's protective forebears, they were welcomed with open arms by the community, which resulted in a special appointment for Angela. "Our niece came over here to get married," she explains, "And I was made mayor so I could carry out the ceremony!" It was this unique hospitality that helped the Goodwins settle into the community with ease, and made it feel like home. "There's a wonderful sense of neighbourliness, and we really appreciate it," says Angela. "It helped us to integrate ourselves very quickly."

John and Angela weren't entirely new to France, which resulted in a seamlessly smooth transition into the village, but navigating the in-depth French legislation turned out to be tricky. "The first thing we had to do was plough through the legal system to buy the property in the first place," tells Angela. "Once you agree a price with the vendor, a solicitor or 'Notaire' will draw up a legally binding contract which both parties sign. Unlike in the UK, professional surveys of the condition of the property are unusual." And the differences didn't end there. "Contractual matters are carried out by the Notaire, who is not appointed to act for either party in the transaction. They're a public official who works for the State and makes sure the transaction is carried out legally and accurately. Using the Notaire means the transaction can't be contested."

The couple became fascinated by the rich history of the village and were thrilled to discover its hospitable culture



MAGICAL MAKEOVER

Once the complex legal procedures were complete, the couple turned their attention to the property itself and were delighted to discover that no gruelling construction work was needed. They had fully renovated their previous homes, but with this historic house, it was all about the interiors. "Our three homes prior to this were in France and Devon, and had been major projects," Angela reveals. "We've always really enjoyed the challenge of doing up a property, but once we fell in love with this quaint little medieval hill-town, we knew that this was where our next move would take us." The allure of the property, the place and the pleasure of decorating proved irresistible, and with many original features still in tact, the building possessed a strong historical charm. It was full of bare brickwork and original wooden structures, ideal for a rustic scheme, so Angela knew exactly what she wanted in terms of the interiors. "Cool contemporary just wouldn't work - the tower house wouldn't have lent itself well to this style," she says, "It exudes a warmth of its own and we wanted to capture that - with all the added benefits of our 21st century comforts, that is!"

Despite choosing a path they weren't entirely familiar with, the Goodwins are certain that they made the right choice with this unusual property. "If we'd seen it before its

refurbishment, we might have thought it too big a job and missed the opportunity to live in such a wonderful old building," says Angela. With plans to convert the outbuilding into a courtyard, the Goodwins adore not just their home, but the wonderful way of life they have adopted. "We just want to enjoy our retirement, immerse ourselves in this wonderful culture and live the dream I suppose!" says Angela, which is precisely what they are doing.

Local lessons

Relocating to a new country can be daunting, particularly in terms of the legislation. One way to help yourself and your legal representative is to ask local artisans to give an opinion on the condition of your property, and quotations for any work needed. This investigative research will give you an in-depth knowledge of the property, as it is unlikely you'll get a detailed report as you would in the UK. You can then sign your agreement, which is binding for both parties, fully aware of what you're getting into.



Period Ideas says

Exposed brick can be a beautiful and authentic feature of a property, and can give great scope when decorating. Painting these natural textures, for instance, is a great way to freshen up your scheme and bring a burst of colour into your home, without losing that shabby chic effect.



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Living the dream

Georgina and Tim Mucklow-Davis loved redecorating their holiday home in sympathetic, Provençal style.

Words **RENÉE PAT GARRATT/CHILL MEDIA** Photography **DAVID GILES/CHILLI MEDIA**



Above Georgina's home combines the best of French style and English comfort, creating a relaxing and stylish retreat for family and friends. The Mucklow-Davis family also enjoy the Cotswolds at home.

Although we know that every cloud has a silver lining, sometimes we need to be creative when looking for it, as Georgina Mucklow-Davis can testify. When her painful back put paid to her skiing days, she and husband, Tim, decided to sell their Swiss apartment and look for a holiday home in the south of France. "Tim had always fancied the idea but I couldn't get excited about it," says Georgina, who is based in Westmancote, Gloucestershire with her family.

She decided to humour her husband, who runs a software company, and agreed to look at properties along the Mediterranean coast, starting in Provence. "On our last day of viewings, we were exhausted," she remembers. "An old wine maker's house in the little village of St Marcel sur Aude, near Narbonne in Languedoc, came up but it didn't appeal to Tim,

who wanted somewhere more isolated. I said we must look at everything and I'm delighted we did, because as soon as we walked in, we both knew that this was it. We put in an offer on the 18th century townhouse immediately."

"The atmosphere in the house was so welcoming that I felt I had just walked into my own home," Georgina explains. "It had been in the same family for 200 years so they were delighted that it was another family buying it." The couple have five children between them, including their own son, Sam, aged 12, who often brings his friend and Georgina's godson, Harry, aged 10, on holiday. "We all get on famously, so we wanted somewhere big enough to sleep everyone in comfort," Georgina explains. "As a bonus, they all took turns coming here to help with the decorating."

REAL HOMES French townhouse



ALL CHANGE

"The whole house, which we bought furnished, was painted a sunshine yellow inside," she remembers. "And some of the furniture was very dark and ornate." They decided to keep a couple of the beds and pretty armoires, which perfectly suited Georgina's taste, but sold the other pieces to a local antiques dealer. A more serious concern for the family was the state of the kitchen and bathrooms.

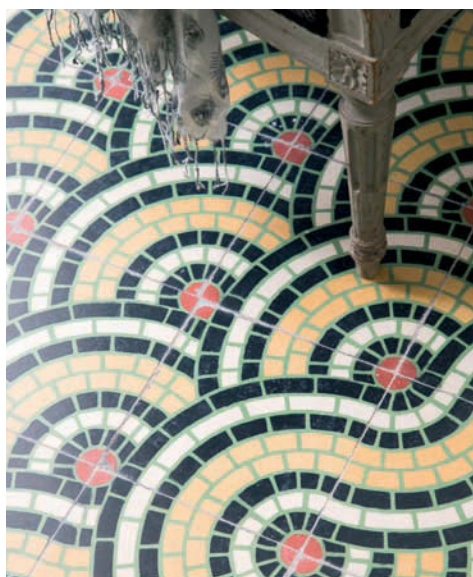
"The kitchen had no windows; it only had a glazed door," says Georgina. "So we put in new windows. Amazingly, the units were fine, so we just painted them and changed the handles, and we also replaced the cooker. One day we plan to re-do the kitchen completely and install something more contemporary, but in the meantime, I love the large, larder cupboard we have in there. I found it in Tewkesbury and knew it was perfect for that spot. Once painted, it now looks as if it had always been there." Today, the kitchen is cool and spacious with a high ceiling and white painted cabinetry.

The blue and white splashback tiles came with the original kitchen but Georgina installed some new ones behind the cooker to make a pretty focal point.

Georgina also added two bathrooms upstairs, using a cave-like space that had been kept for wine-making. All the fittings were brought over from England, together with a trusted plumber-cum-builder who stayed in the property while doing all the major renovation work, so that the five-bedroom house was fit for purpose.

Much of the furniture that was needed to top up the existing pieces was ferried over from the UK with the help of family members with vans. Georgina found several great buys on e-bay, including the dining room suite. Her local antiques shops in Tewkesbury also came up trumps, providing chairs and chests that fitted perfectly into the traditional French home. "I didn't take measurements but furnished every room in the house from memory," says Georgina. "It worked out very well."

Above The lovely combination of shapes and colour in the living room makes it the perfect place to read a book or curl up with some four-legged friends. Coloured glassware is a particular nice touch on the shelves.



When you are eating
or sunbathing outside,
the scent of lavender
is absolutely gorgeous





I like to find a colour scheme that is pleasing to the eye and relaxing but still has vibrancy

POOLING RESOURCES

Outside, Georgina's priority was the creation of a swimming pool as there was plenty of space on the two acres of land behind the house. Georgina and Tim designed the pool, ensuring there was plenty of sunbathing space and sweet-smelling lavender, jasmine and roses around the sides, while a local pool company did the excavation and installation. "When we are eating or sunbathing outside, the scent of lavender is gorgeous," says Georgina.

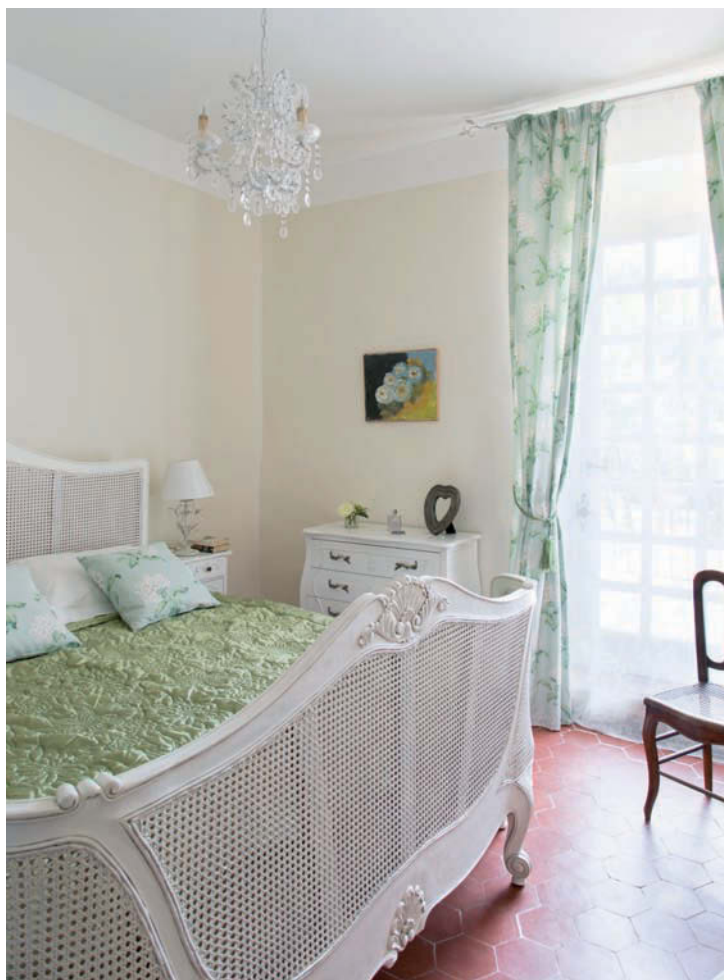
When the family arrives on holiday, a familiar pattern of activity begins. "I get up early to buy the bread and croissants at the bakery," says Georgina. "Breakfast is on the terrace then it's off to the supermarket to shop for lunch and supper. I love cooking. It's fairly full-on but I make sure there is time to relax by the pool, go to the beach or try trout fishing in the local river. And we always love visiting the amazing walled town of Carcassonne. There's something here for everyone to enjoy."

INSIDE KNOWLEDGE

Look before you leap if you are tempted to buy a holiday home abroad. Be prepared for culture shock as well as different ways of doing business and managing money

Managing a second property can be challenging, especially when it comes to maintenance. Georgina says, "Always get more than one quote for any work that is required. We needed two trees cutting back. Our first quote was for 4,000 euros! We were told that this was a normal price for the area. Our final quote was for 995 euros!"

The Mucklow-Davis house can be rented when the family is not there. If you are interested click on leparc-france.weebly.com





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CLOSING DATE: 8th May 2015

TIMELESS ELEGANCE

Strike A BALANCE

Lucy Hodgson found a happy medium between her personal taste and the original style of her period property to create a fabulous apartment

Words **SHARON SMITH/CHILLI MEDIA** Photography **DAVID GILES/CHILLI MEDIA**

We can spend years dreaming about our ideal home, tirelessly planning how we would like our future property to look. However, despite the best-laid plans, sometimes a house which is completely different from what we had in mind captures our attention. This is exactly what happened to Lucy Hodgson, who had always had her sights set on a period cottage full of character and charm. She now resides in a spacious, three-bedroom apartment in a converted Georgian asylum. "After seeing the estate agent's pictures of the property, I was immediately struck by its grandeur and beauty," she explains. "When I came for a viewing, it certainly lived up to its billing. I especially loved its high ceilings, big windows and generous-sized rooms, which were flooded with light. And I have always been a fan of Georgian style."

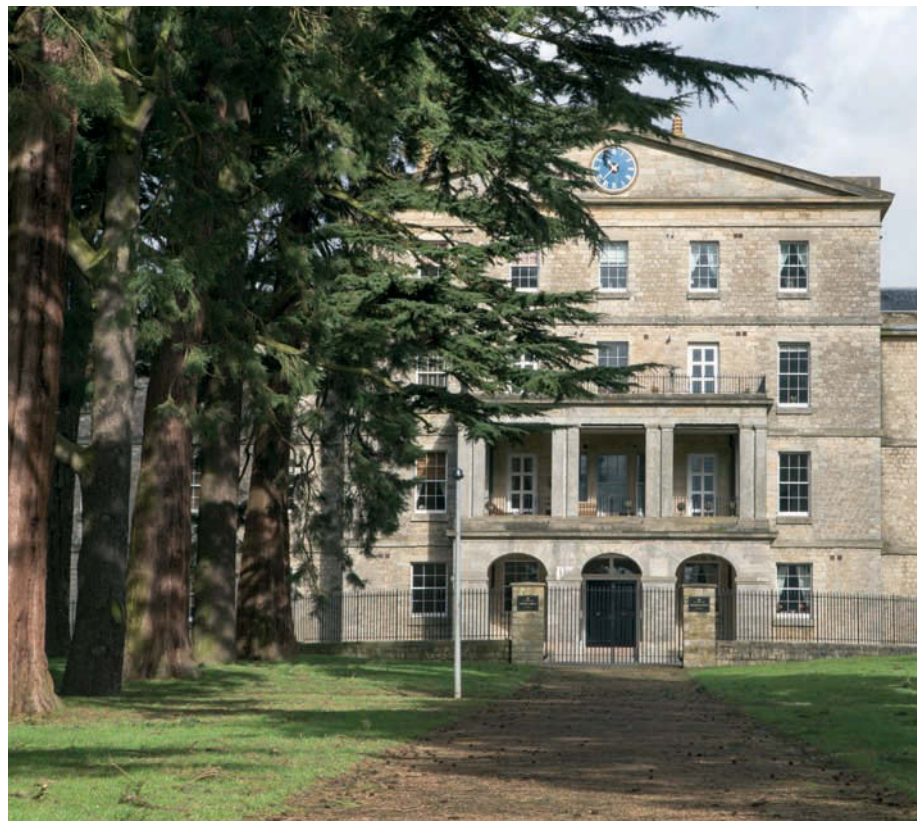
As well as admiring the historic architecture, Lucy also appreciated the sympathetic restoration that had taken place. Many of the period features had been restored to their former glory, or added by the developers when they converted it back in 2001. "It had been very sympathetically done, which I liked," says Lucy. "For example, the two bathrooms' fittings are in a period style and the kitchen is in a traditional solid cherry wood. This meant that I didn't need to do any work to the kitchen and bathrooms, so I could spend more money on accessories, furniture and paintwork, to create something truly amazing. I am a headhunter by profession, but I've always had a secret passion for interior design, so it was right up my street."

Not only did the property possess impressive interiors, it was also in a stunning location. "You can see right across the Kent Weald from the living room windows," Lucy explains. "It's such a beautiful building and the grounds are so peaceful and serene. After doing some research on its history, I discovered that it was an asylum many years ago. Patients were brought here to be cured, and I can definitely understand why the doctors felt that this lovely, tranquil location would help with that."

NEUTRAL BUT NICE

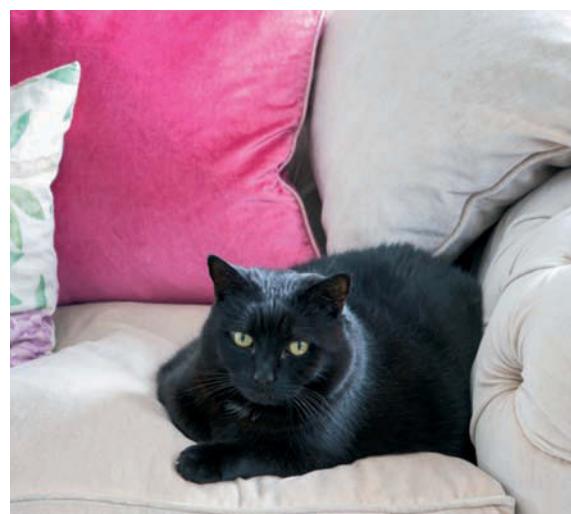
When Lucy moved into the apartment in May 2007, she was hesitant to make any radical changes to the décor. While she wasn't a huge fan of the multi-hued sitting room – with its bold colour combination of orange and lilac – or the dark brown walls in the master bedroom and kitchen, she decided to leave them for a year before deciding what shades to redecorate with. "I think it is important to get the feel of a place before changing it – to see how the light falls, how each room looks at different times of the day and how the changing seasons have an effect on the interiors," she explains.

Right In the living room, Lucy used accessories to bring colour into the space. She re-covered the cushions in a floral fabric by Osborne & Little, which is actually from an old pair of curtains.





I was immediately struck by the grandeur and beauty of the building and I especially loved its high ceilings



TALKING SHOP

Headhunter by day, bargain hunter by night, Lucy reveals her tips for sourcing the best-priced pieces.

- Wherever you go, make a little more time to hunt down things for your house. I am always on the lookout for bargains. I also swap furniture and items with friends. If someone is moving house, ask them if there is anything they don't want to take with them.
- Shop all over the place. I prefer dusty little shops down back streets, where you can root around. You never quite know what you'll discover there.
- My best bargain is our Parker Knoll wing chair. I bought it for £50 in a local house clearance shop. It was in a sorry state – I put it in the spare room and it stank the whole apartment out! After it was thoroughly aired I re-covered it in Designers Guild fabric.



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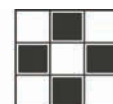
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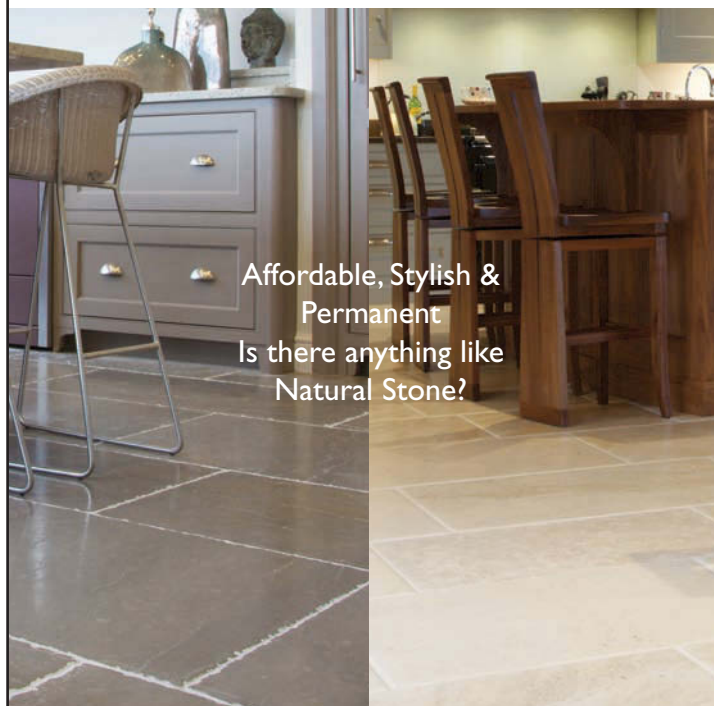
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As well as living with décor that wasn't quite to her taste, Lucy also found she had to compromise her personal style to accommodate the property's age. However, as the Georgian feel was one of the key reasons why she bought the apartment, she was only too happy to make a concession. "I realised that the colour palette and the furnishings would have to be more restrained than my usual tastes," she says. "I had all of the walls in the apartment painted in a neutral shade, so I could start with a completely blank canvas."

She retained the neutral décor in the sitting room, partly out of deference to the high-ceilinged, period elegance, but also because she wanted to recreate the tranquility of the location. "I chose Timeless by Dulux for the walls because I wanted this room to be my calm oasis; a place to relax. I kept the background fairly plain and have brought in colour and interest through the use of furnishings and furniture."

FAMILY TREASURES

Lucy quickly realised that most of the furniture she had brought with her from her previous house was too modern for the apartment, so she sold and gave items away to friends and family, in order to make way for new pieces that were more in keeping with the décor. "Many of the family heirlooms I had accumulated over the years went perfectly with the period of the house, such as a chest of drawers which once belonged to my grandparents. It started out two drawers higher but my gran was only 4ft 11" and couldn't reach the top drawers, so my granddad lopped them off! It now resides in my sitting room," laughs Lucy. The coffee table in the lounge is another period piece, having originally been a George IV dining table.

Lucy then set about introducing colour into the rest of the rooms. In the kitchen/diner, she distinguished the different areas by using two separate colour



Below The kitchen has been painted in Farrow & Ball's Lamp Room Gray. This lighter tone was carefully chosen to contrast with the dining area and also to offset the rich tones of the solid cherry wood units.



REAL HOMES Georgian grandeur



schemes. In each of the bedrooms, she papered one wall as a feature then blended in the rest of the furnishings to match.

In achieving a balance between her personal taste for bright hues and the age of the building, Lucy admits the result is different to her usual style. "It is far more glamorous than I'd originally intended," she admits. "I'm a t-shirt and jeans girl, so when friends and family visited for the first time, they'd walk into the sitting room, stop and stare and say, 'Wow, this is amazing, did you really do this?!' But it feels right for the apartment and while it is very sophisticated, it's still a warm and friendly haven, where we can all relax."

I think it is important to get the feel of a place, to see how the light falls and how each room looks at different times of the day

Right Lucy wanted to create a Thirties feel in the master bedroom and the painted pine chest of drawers, which doubles up as a dressing table, completes the look. She covered the wall above the bed with Laura Ashley Lilac Eau De Nil floral wallpaper.



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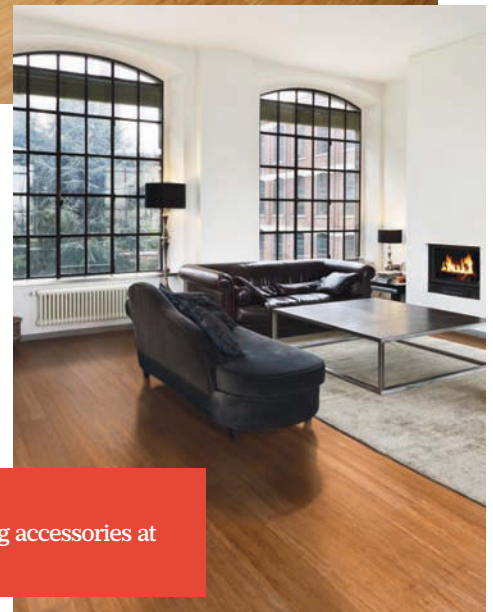
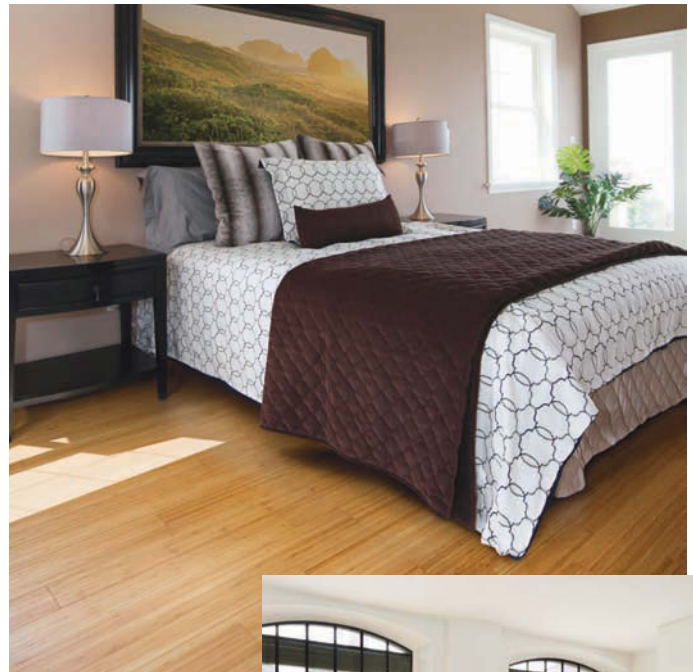
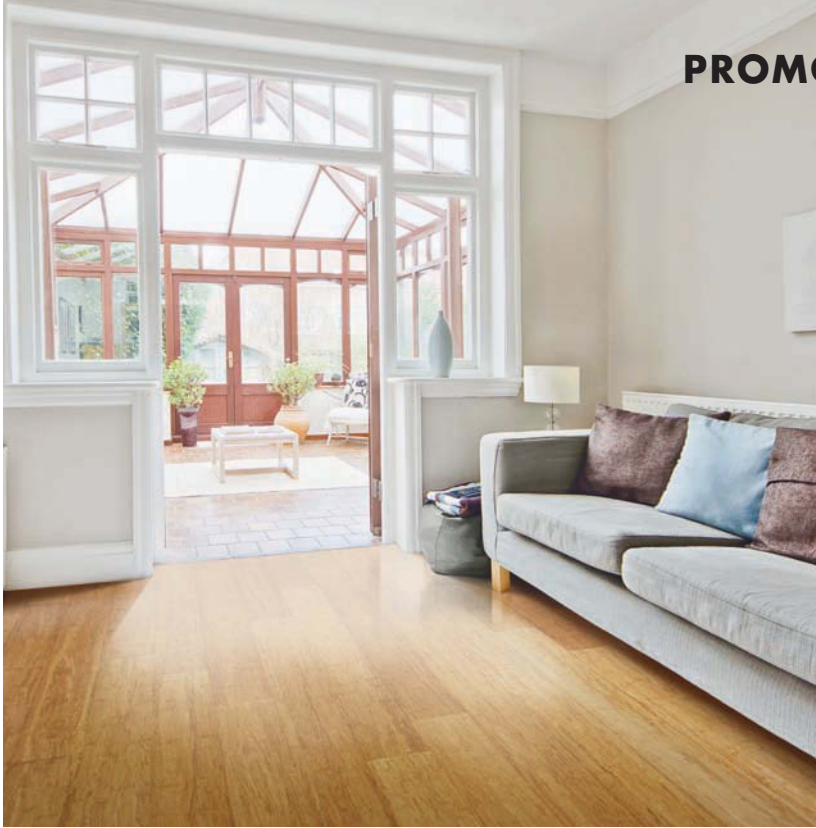
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While some people crave the luxurious feel of a heavy pile underfoot, bamboo flooring is becoming increasingly popular among many home owners. As well as being timeless in appearance and complementing almost all décor schemes, it is also much easier to maintain than carpet, and can be kept clean and stain-free with minimal effort.

If your home doesn't boast original flooring but you're keen to update this important element, consider bamboo flooring. The Bamboo Flooring Company offers a wide range of options to suit any interior style. All three types of its bamboo flooring (vertical, horizontal and strand woven) are available in either solid bamboo or an engineered bamboo format, which is constructed from two different layers. In addition to this, there are two main colours to choose from - natural and carbonised, which is a warmer, richer hue.

Bamboo is a durable alternative to traditional wooden flooring, thanks to having a higher fibre rating than any type of wood. For example, strand woven bamboo is over twice as strong as oak, making it exceptionally hard-wearing.

Uniclic bamboo flooring can be used with underfloor heating, fitted in rooms with fluctuating temperatures and humidity and installed on almost any subfloor. As well as this, bamboo is on average a third cheaper than other varieties of hardwood floor, making it a cost-effective update for your home.

PURE AND SIMPLE

When it comes to laying new flooring or indeed, any home renovation, you may be concerned that the work might be inconvenient or difficult. Thankfully that's not the case with bamboo flooring, which can be installed in a number of different ways, depending on your requirements. Whether you're floating it over an underlay, gluing it down with a flexible floor adhesive or using secret nails to secure it, the choice of a click fitting system or tongue and groove option makes installation straightforward and super quick.

Once your floor is in place, you don't need to worry about maintenance. Simply sweep it with a soft brush and clean using a PH neutral wooden floor cleaner and microfibre cloth regularly. Damage and scratches can be

prevented by remembering to remove your shoes when you enter your house, and fixing anti-scratch felt pads to the bottom of furniture.

ECO-FRIENDLY FLOORING

Another benefit of bamboo is its sustainability. The highly renewable grass can grow to maturity within five years, whereas hardwood trees can take over twenty five years to do so. Bamboo doesn't need to be re-planted like trees either, as the grass root continues to grow once it has been harvested. To ensure the bamboo flooring that you choose is truly eco-friendly, look out for products with 100% FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certification, as this guarantees that the materials come from responsibly managed forests.

As hayfever season approaches, sufferers of this irritating condition will be preparing for a rise in levels of allergens. Bamboo floors can improve life for people with allergies, as this type of flooring won't collect dust in the way that carpets can. It is also resistant to the mould and mildew which can grow in deep pile carpets, ensuring you don't have to worry about any nasty spores in your abode.





LONDON LIVING

ATTENTION TO DETAIL

*Debs and Nick Henderson used a
Scandinavian colour palette to
transform their property into a light
and breezy family home*

Words **ELIZABETH WHITING**

Photography **SPIKE POWELL**

REAL HOMES **Victorian chic**



Left A Gustavian clock in the dining room is a charming way to keep track of the time. The simple white chair covers give a romantic feel to family dinner times. Shutters provide privacy in the kitchen and shade the hot sun.

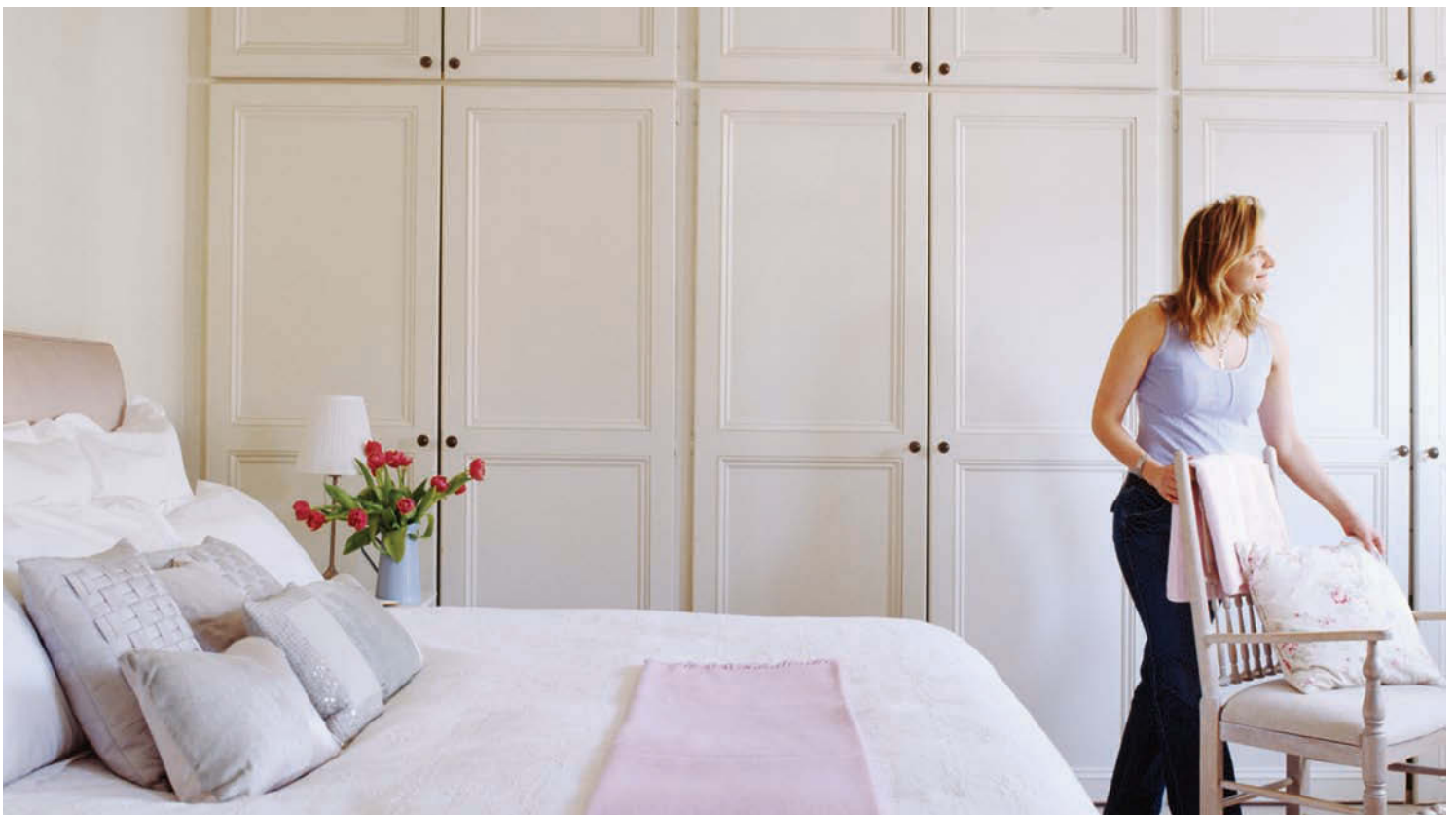
Debs and Nick Henderson instantly fell in love with the Victorian terrace in Clapham Common that they now call home. Debs reveals they were drawn to the size and layout of the house because “some London properties can be so formal and impersonal,” and they knew it would be an ideal family base. The five-bedroom house features two bathrooms and a playroom, ideal for a busy and fun family life. Since moving in, the look has evolved and now revolves around life with their three children; Joshua, aged eight, Jake, six and Gracie, two.

When the couple first bought the house, it was smartly decorated, but in dark colours with plenty of patterned wallpaper. This did not reflect their taste at all – and so the dark wallpapers were stripped and a mahogany fireplace was ripped out and updated with an elegant, pale grey stone design. But these were just the first few steps in the couple’s move to completely change the appearance and ambience of their new home.

While Nick went to work in the City each day, Debs was thrilled to take up the challenge of renovating their home. Having never done up a house before, she started with a blank canvas. She spent many happy hours flicking through glossy interiors magazines and browsing shops with a fervour. Through this process she discovered that she had an eye for detail and a flair for design. “I really enjoyed going around the shops and picking up different ideas. Finding out what you do and do not like is a slow process but it is worth it. You have to be prepared to wait until you find exactly the right piece that will catch your eye and inspire you,” she says.

COMPLETE UPDATE

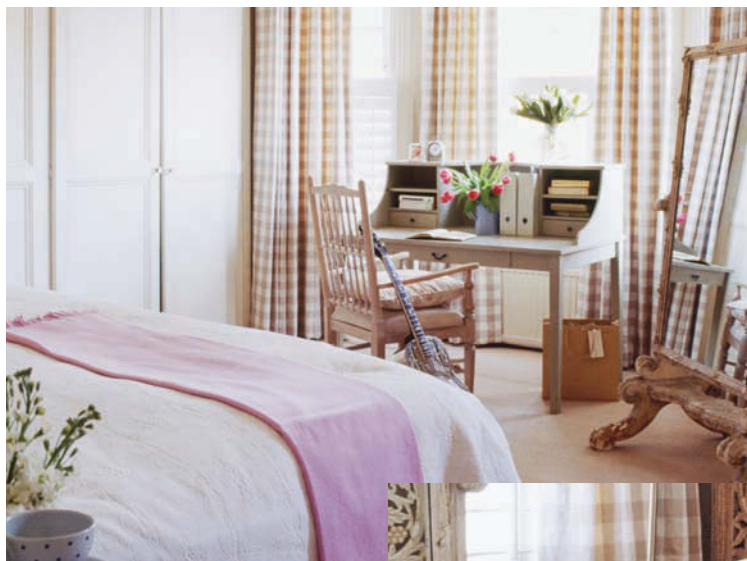
The property has gone through a complete cosmetic transformation and has emerged as a family-friendly, yet sophisticated home. The first step of the overhaul was to have the whole house repainted. “I prefer lighter colours and a plain neutral canvas to which you can add pattern and colour in







Finding out what you do and do not like is a slow process but it is worth taking your time



small doses," Debs continues. "Sometimes just a bunch of flowers is enough." She decided to opt for a subtle colour scheme, based on a gentle Scandinavian palette of creams, greys and white. However, one colour definitely did not make the cut. "I realised I do not like yellow at all, so it doesn't feature anywhere in my house," she says.

PRACTICAL PLEASURES

Although Debs was enjoying her research and shopping trips, she also knew she had some practical jobs to tick off on her renovation to-do list. All floor coverings were changed, apart from in the hallway, where the Hendersons were lucky enough to have inherited Victorian tiles in remarkably good condition. Wood floors were laid on the ground level and floor boards in the kitchen painted a crisp white. The rest of the house was covered in a pale cream ribbed carpet. "In hindsight, the cream carpet was not the most practical idea. I just have to have it professionally cleaned periodically, but I do not regret my choice as it amplifies light in all the upstairs rooms, and light is what I wanted," Debs says.

Once the dust from the renovation had settled, Debs directed her efforts to the windows. Some sophisticated wide-slatted white shutters were installed throughout the house, creating a fresh and relaxed New England look, as well as filtering the light.

With the practical and messy jobs out of the way, Debs and Nick began their search for painted furniture, crystal chandeliers, mirrors and other treasures that would reflect their tastes and personalities. Although the process has taken years to complete, as Debs points out: "That is the nature of doing up houses. You have to be patient and these things are not cheap." Mixing old and new shapes gives the house

historic breadth and sticking to sleek and simple lines has also paid off, as every room has a sense of ordered tranquillity, as well as feeling uncluttered. "Knowing what you like, and not getting thrown off your vision is really important," she says. "It is easy to get distracted in a shop packed full of really lovely things, but you have to know what you like and keep your style firmly in the front of your mind."

Creating a focal point to each room became an important priority in Debs' furnishing plans. Using a fireplace, oversized mirror or simply a large beautiful piece of furniture gives each a room a necessary focus which is much appreciated by all visitors to the Henderson's house. Her vision has come to life thanks to the financial backing of her husband Nick. "He is always enthusiastic and happy to let me have my way while he picks up the bills," she says. "He is just incredibly appreciative and generous. We both love the light and the space as well as the lovely vistas. We are truly blessed."

Above Delicate rose prints in the master bedroom tone well with soft brown checks and gently distressed furniture. Silverware in simple shapes is another clever way to add subtle interest.

THE POWER OF PASTELS

Add interest and subtle colours to a room by using pastel tones and accessories

Be inspired by Debs and Nick and use delicate hues to lift your rooms. Pastel blues, soft pinks and gentle greys will complement a neutral colour scheme without overpowering to provide a homely and comforting feel. Keep your accessories to a minimum for pared back chic and avoid clutter. Opt for plenty of fresh flowers to draw the eye to key areas of the room.

GIVEAWAYS *Fantastic prizes*



Swanning around

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The newly opened Weavers' House Spa offers over 30 facial and body treatments and features the exceptional Temple Spa range of

products, as well as providing bespoke day packages. Its signature treatment, the Weavers' House Hug, includes a facial and deep-tissue massage with warm oils and hot stone therapy, and is certain to leave you feeling refreshed and revitalised.

Plus, you can sample the sumptuous menu in the AA two rosette Gallery restaurant or, if you fancy something more casual, there's the



tasty and informal Brasserie. Other facilities include six treatment rooms with two relaxation suites, a couple's room, a manicure and pedicure area, an aromatic steam room, the hot stone sauna and an outdoor vitality pool. One lucky reader and their guest will win two nights' B&B in a luxury Lavenham room, including à la carte dinner on one evening, use of the spa facilities and a one hour treatment of choice each*. For more information call **01787 247 477** or visit **theswanatlavenham.co.uk**

How to enter

For the chance to win these fabulous prizes, turn to page 138 or head to **periodideas.com**

*The prize must be taken by 30th November 2015, is subject to availability and excludes weeks with bank holidays. Travel, meals, drinks and additional spa treatments other than those featured in the prize are not included. The prize is open to readers aged 18 or over, is non-transferable and there is no cash alternative.

CLOSING DATE: 8th May 2015.

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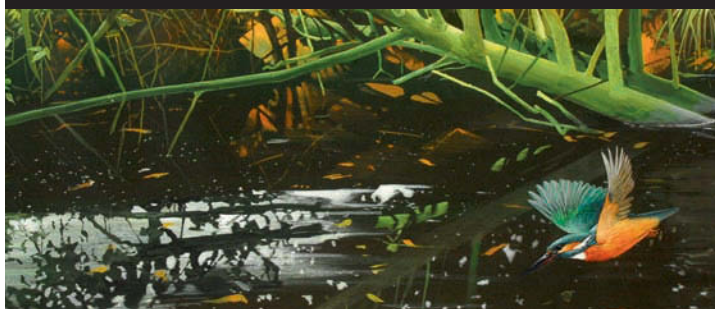
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PICTURE PERFECT

Collectables

Margaret Powling explores the fascinating world of portrait miniatures

After I visit historic houses, I find that often one memory lingers when all the others have faded. When I think of Kingston Lacy, in Hampshire, the elegant pink drawing room comes to mind, its walls decorated in the most glorious rose damask dating from 1897, and I recall its fascinating portrait miniatures.

The drawing room displays the greater part of 50 enamel miniatures painted on copper by Henry Bone, RA (1755-1834), arguably the greatest British artist in this demanding medium, and another five by his son, Henry Pierce Bone (1779-1855). Father and son specialised in making perfect tiny copies of well-known paintings in the finest collections. These pictures, in deep, gilt frames, hang roughly at table-height around the room, and mostly portray Queen Elizabeth I and her courtiers and contemporaries.



CAPTURE THE MOMENT

At the risk of stating the obvious, portrait miniatures were created to capture an accurate likeness of a person in the days before photography (and, dare I say, mobile phones). This artform began as part of the decoration of illuminated manuscripts in Holland, Italy and Bulgaria, and was adopted in England, certainly by around 1400.

Popularised at Henry VIII's court by Hans Holbein and Lucas Horenbout, a Flemish artist who moved to England in the 1520s and is said

to have founded the English school of portrait miniature painting, it became known as 'limning'. The 'limner', worked with very fine brushes, known as 'pencils'. The word miniature is from the Latin *minium*, meaning red lead or vermillion, the pigment used to paint the initial letters in medieval illuminated manuscripts.

There are two types of

miniature.

The first was designed to be worn as jewellery by someone connected with the sitter. It formed part of fashionable dress, and was often worn at the wrist or as a brooch pinned to the décolletage, where it was emblematically close to the heart. The second was the cabinet miniature, designed to be displayed in a cabinet or

vitrine, or hung on a wall. The art critic, Andrew Graham Dixon, has likened the Elizabethan portrait miniature to the sonnet, "for it too compresses a powerful feeling into a small space: 14 lines of verse."

GLORIANA'S COURT

The first great age of miniature painting was in Elizabeth I's reign when portraits were painted in watercolour on vellum. Nicholas Hilliard (1547-1619) was the official portrait painter to the court and continued as Royal Limner under James I. Hilliard's pupil, Isaac Oliver (c1565-

1617), "delighted in the freedom of continental painting, specially in the use of strong shadows, in contrast to Hilliard's lack of such, which gave his sitters the semblance of abstract icons," says Richard Walker, an authority on English miniature painting.

According to another specialist, Michael Newman, "the next limner of note was John Hoskins (1586-1664)." Hoskins' nephew, Samuel Cooper (1608-1672) developed new techniques and also introduced an innovative system of lighting which, according to Newman, "threw the modelling of his subject into striking relief."

Miniature painting also blossomed from the mid-18th century to the early 19th century, when Richard Cosway (1742-1821), the aforementioned Bones, father and son, and John Smart (1740-1811) - who spent ten years in India painting serving officers of the East India Company and their wives - worked in watercolour on ivory. Collecting portrait miniatures became a royal pastime - George IV festooned his dressing room at Carlton House with them. And where royalty led, others followed, and the vogue continued unabated into the 19th and 20th centuries.





Top left
Sir John Banks
(after Gilbert
Jackson), and Lady
Banks, of Corfe
Castle and Kingston
Lacy by Henry Bone.

Above and right
The drawing room at
Kingston Lacy,
nationaltrust.org.uk

Far left
Lady Anne Russell,
by Henry Bone.

Top right.
Queen Elizabeth I,
after Zuchero, by
Henry Bone.

Bottom right
Sir Henry Wotton
and Lady Russell of
Thornhaugh by
Henry Bone.

Images © NTPL/
James Mortimer,
Derrick E. Witty,
Simon Harris,
Richard Pink



Margaret's Excellent Advice

Our expert shares her findings on the history of portrait miniatures with *Period Ideas* readers

Portrait miniatures must be no more than 1½ inches from the chin to top of head. They were painted in oil, watercolour and enamel, but chiefly in watercolour. During the late 17th century, vitreous enamel on copper was a popular medium. The use of ivory was adopted around 1700 and watercolour on ivory became the standard medium in the 18th century.

Most miniatures were of white European subjects so if a portrait of an African or Asian comes onto the market, this generates a lot more interest. Remember that smudges can often reduce a painting's price – if the base is ivory even after 200 or more years the watercolour will smear if rubbed.

During the 1700s men and women powdered their hair white (or put on wigs) before sitting for their portraits. They would sometimes snip off a lock of pre-powdered hair and stick it to the reverse of the portrait, thereby showing its natural colour.



DIARY DATES

● Petworth Park Antiques & Fine Art Fair, Sussex, 8th-10th May

Explore the cream of fine art and antiques in a purpose-built marquee in the grounds of glorious Petworth House, overlooking the lake. Exhibitors will be drawn primarily from the BADA and LAPADA and the fair is vetted for quality and correct attribution. Whether you are looking for a new painting, top notch antique silver or period jewellery, you are sure to have a splendid day out in this beautiful part of the world. There is even a restaurant, in case you work up an appetite whilst treasure hunting. Tickets are £10 on the door, open from 11am-8pm on Friday, 10.30am-6pm on Saturday and 10.30am-5pm on Sunday. 01798 343 929, petworthparkfair.com

● The Annual Buxton Antiques and Fine Air Fair, Buxton Pavilion, Derbyshire, 14th May

This well-known event takes place every May at the famous Pavilion Gardens in the heart of Buxton, the popular spa town and cultural heart of the Peak District. Why not book a mini-break and enjoy the walking in one of the UK's best national parks as well as discovering some gems for your home? Don't forget to stop off at Chatsworth, Hardwick Hall and Bakewell too! The fair is a major provincial event that has enjoyed a high status since its inception 51 years ago. Tickets are £5 on the door, open from 11am-7pm on Thursday, 11am-6pm on Friday, 11am-5pm on Saturday and Sunday. 01278 784 912, cooperevents.com

● Staffordshire Antiques and Collectables Fair, Stafford County Showground, 16th-17th May

If you're in the Midlands, come and treat yourself at this fantastic fair. It has been held on this site since 1973 and is the longest running fair in the region. You can browse up to 300 stands in three inter-linked halls. Exhibitors come from all over the UK and in addition to a wide range of traditional antiques, including furniture, clocks, painting, pottery, porcelain and jewellery, there is also an interesting selection of retro and vintage items and more contemporary collectables. Get there early to grab a bargain and beat the dealers at this dog-friendly venue. Admission prices are £4 from 8.30am-10.30am, on the first day. Thereafter, everyone over 14 pays £3 and under 14s are free. 01785 660 236, numberoneevents.co.uk

● Collectors & Sporting Sale, Lawrences Auctioneers, Crewkerne, 21st-22nd May

The recreation of a historical period mixed with intense personal associations is at the heart of vintage appeal, so prepare for a trip down memory lane this month. "The love of nostalgia and the concentration on accuracy can become an overriding passion," says Simon Jones, specialist in toys and collectors' items. "We often see model train collectors who will say 'I had one of those when I was a boy' when they see a model that they remember from childhood." Get in touch to find out more about viewing times in the sales rooms, and to get an idea of the treasures on offer. 01460 73041, lawrences.co.uk

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BANKING *on victory*



Go behind the scenes at a glorious country house which was transformed by war

Words **SUSAN DICKERSON** Photography **NTPL/RUPERT TRUMAN/TIM JAMES**



Above Michelle Leake and Rachael O'Connor-Boyd, the ladies behind Upton's latest great project. Lady Bearsted, right in the black and white picture, was a vital part of the war effort in London.

As the storm clouds of war gathered in 1939, Walter Samuel, Lord Bearsted, got ready to take his work home. He was 57, and born into wealth, as his family business was the Shell Transport and Trading Company (now better known as Shell Oil). Walter had a merchant bank, Samuel & Co, and the government needed the wheels of commerce to keep turning. One of his four homes was Upton House, near Banbury, in Warwickshire, so when he moved his 22 staff into his mansion, he decamped to the Dorchester, regarded as one of the safest places in London thanks to its underground ballroom.

The transformation of a house brimming with Old Masters into an office and dormitories for the banking staff is recreated this year by Rachael O'Connor-Boyd, Visitor Experience

Project Manager, and Michelle Leake, Collections and Engagement Manager. "The more I discover about Lord Bearsted, the more I grow to love this man," says Rachael. "He believed in deeds not words. It is true that he was incredibly wealthy, in the way that Bill Gates is today, but he believed that civic responsibility came with his riches."

KEEP THE FAITH

Today, when anti-semitism is on the rise in Europe, it is poignant to remember that Lord Bearsted was a practising Jew and a pillar of English society. "His faith was not a limiting factor," says Rachael. "He supported all sorts of charities and he was awarded a military cross in the First World War. We discovered last year that he played an important role in the Kindertransport, which placed 10,000 Jewish children in British foster homes.

"Walter was part of a 1936 mission to the USA to raise money for German Jews and met with President Roosevelt. Lord Bearsted also worked in the Special Operations Executive, a secret organisation created after France fell in 1940. It was intended to help local resistance movements and conduct espionage and sabotage in enemy-held territories. We found a touching letter from his son which reads 'I wish you'd tell me what you'd done in the war'."

Although Walter began collecting art and sculpture in his twenties, he never forgot his roots. His Jewish grandfather had emigrated from Persia to the East End of London, and his

The more I discover about Lord Bearsted, the more I grow to love this man





People POWER

Banking for Victory opens to the public on 27th March at Upton House, near Banbury. You can see rooms specially decorated and dressed to reflect life during the Second World War. Look out for enchanting period details. This groundbreaking project gives new energy to the heritage sector. 01295 670 266, nationaltrust.org.uk



father and uncle built on his success in trading a range of goods including paraffin. A combination of luck and great timing meant they were well-placed when the exploration and refining of oil for automotive use began. In fact, the world's first oil tanker belonged to them. The company name Shell came from the ornamental trinket boxes covered with shells which Walter's grandfather used to sell.

SAFE HAVEN

"Lord and Lady Bearsted were both involved in the war effort," says Rachael. "I think Walter was a benevolent employer and he wanted to keep his staff safe and well looked after. Lady Bearsted worked with the YMCA and the WVS, running mobile canteens in the East End. I think the story of the home front touches people, especially as it is 70th anniversary of the end of the war in Europe and Japan this year."

Rachael and Michelle have spent the past nine months getting the Banking for Victory project ready. "We've had a huge amount of help from visitors, staff and volunteers as well as consultants and regional museums. People have loaned us personal possessions to help us recreate the house at that time. We want to tell a story so some of the rooms are spotlit like stage sets so we can give visitors a flavour of how the bank employees lived and worked here, with the skeleton staff of the household."

The team has collected thousands of objects and volunteers have sewn rag rugs and made clothes. Windows are covered in blackout fabric as the house was in



danger at one point as it was close to RAF Edgehill. "We have letters from Lord Bearsted to Kenneth Clarke at the National Gallery asking him to take some of his paintings underground to hide in the Welsh caves, so the threat was very real," says Rachael.

"Whilst the bank staff were away from the Blitz and had a better war than some people, we need to recognise the trauma of war," she adds. The bombing of Coventry, 30 miles from Upton, wounded the national psyche. "One of our volunteers wept as she told me that a childhood friend died in the Coventry air raids, in which 700 houses were destroyed. Everyone has a story about Coventry and it is very powerful," says Rachael. "The bank staff may have been safer out in the country but they had left their families behind in London. They didn't know how long the war would last. Although they had the run of place, they were listening to the wireless, hungry for news and longing for peace."



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STYLE EDIT

*Interiors that inspire, objects of desire,
and the very finest of this season's shopping*

Compiled by **CHARLOTTE BARBER** Edited by **SEOANA SHERRY-BRENNAN**

Hamilton and Celina collections,
from £12, Marks & Spencer.
0333 014 8000,
marksandspencer.com



MAY'S MUST-HAVES

Now that spring is in **FULL BLOOM**, we bring you a host of **BRIGHT AND BREEZY** styles to enliven your home. From beautiful **BIRD-INSPIRED ACCESSORIES** to creating a Provençal kitchen, you'll love these **FRESH COLOURS** and **PLAYFUL PRINTS**. Explore **ART NOUVEAU** style as we celebrate this decorative era and showcase some fabulous ideas to give your house a **NEW LEASE OF LIFE**

Luxury fix

The latest stylish finds and designer details for your home this season



IN PRINT

Inspired by French mid-century design, the Le Cocktail Twin sofa is upholstered in a stylish dogtooth print fabric from Designer's Guild. Its slim-line legs and simple button-back make it the perfect piece to add a subtle retro twist to your scheme. Priced at £585, Oliver Bonas. **020 8974 0110, oliverbonas.com**



CLUB TROPICANA

Create an exotic vibe in your interiors with bold colours and fun motifs. We love these Fanjul cushions, which are inspired by lush tropical gardens. Available in three striking colours, they are priced at £66 each. Find them and other statement pieces for your home at **dar-leone.com**



FLORAL FANCY

Our pick for the new season is the latest addition to Ian Mankin's collection of pink papers and fabrics. The Imperial range includes this Kew wallpaper (seen here in Baltic pink), priced at £49.50 for a 10m roll.

020 7722 0997, ianmankin.co.uk

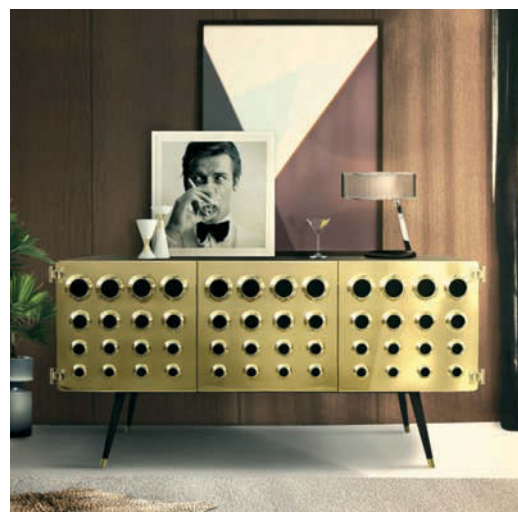
TREAD SOFTLY

Add the wow factor to your living space with this Riad rug from Luku Home. The striking repeat pattern, in a stylish monochrome and turquoise scheme, showcases this season's love of all things Moroccan. Hand-knotted from 100% wool, prices start at £500. **020 8943 3683, lukuhome.com**



SHAKEN OR STIRRED?

Mid-century design is a key trend for SS15, and what better way to celebrate the style than with this Monocles sideboard from Delightfull? Handmade from solid walnut with brass details, it's ideal for housing all your cocktail making ingredients and is priced at €9,770. **delightfull.eu**





FROND EMBRACE

Bring the outdoors in with Laura Ashley's Palm House collection. You'll be able to enjoy your meals surrounded by seasonal prints, such as this Francesca Apple fabric, priced at £35 per m. **03332 008 009, lauraashley.com**

TOP DRAWER

Handmade in solid cherry and oak, Roche Bobois' Art Deco-inspired Claridge collection includes bookcases, sideboards and dressers. With its hand-applied antique patina finish, decorative paintwork and brass hardware, this chest will make a statement in any room, and is priced at £2,240.

020 7317 8828, roche-bobois.com



WHITE HOT

Crafted from sustainable sources, the new Maximum Extralite[®] porcelain tiles from Fiandre are just the thing for high-traffic areas such as kitchens and bathrooms, thanks to their durability. Seen here is the Marmi Imperial white colourway, available from Stone Age. **020 7384 9090, stone-age.co.uk**

SLEEP IN BEAUTY

Add an air of romance to your boudoir with the Venice collection of bed linen, brand new from Christy. Reminiscent of antique tapestry, the subtle sheen of this opulent jacquard fabric is available in two colourways, mustard and duck egg. Priced from £30 for a cushion, summer bedlinen doesn't get better than this. **0845 758 5252, christy-towels.com**



FINE DINING

Enjoy dining at its finest with the elegant, French-inspired Luxus dining chair. Stunning on its own or as part of a set with the Luxus dining table, the chic, cream hue and delicate floral print will turn every meal into a feast for all the senses. £878 each, Touched Interiors. **0845 463 0083, touchedinteriors.co.uk**



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NEWTON BATH TUB *will add
an edge to your wash zone*

Universally acknowledged as the number two cure for all of life's stresses (pipped narrowly to the post by a cup of tea), you can't beat a relaxing soak in the tub, and this eye-catching design will ensure that you are bathing in style. Its futuristic shape, with oversized bubbles in the form of black lacquer and brass spheres finished in a high-gloss varnish, makes this bijou bath a true statement piece. Measuring a petite 80cmH x 90cmD x 180cmL, the Newton bath also boasts several gold-plated spheres on its base for an added element of luxury.

The Grochet bedside table is priced at around £7,500, from Boca Do Lobo bocadolobo.com

The Newton bath tub is available from Maison Valentina, priced at €29,310 (approximately £21,630.25). maisonvalentina.net

STYLE THROUGH THE AGES

Art Nouveau

In the latest instalment of our series, Charlotte Barber showcases the Art Nouveau period and explores its influence on interiors

Emerging during the 1890s and formally recognised as the first modern style of the 20th century, Art Nouveau was seen as a refreshing alternative to the constraints of previous design eras. It shared many of the same principles as the Arts & Crafts movement, celebrating artisans and the virtues of hand-craftsmanship, although it also embraced mass production and the machine age in a way which previous movements had not.

The look had two distinct styles – sinewy, romantic curves and stylised forms, as celebrated in the glasswork of Louis Comfort Tiffany, and the strong, linear look of furniture designers such as Charles Rennie Mackintosh. With the stylised forms firmly rooted in the natural world, themes of evolution and nature's beauty appeared in abundance, and plant, flower and insect motifs took centre stage. In contrast, simple, geometric shapes and patterns were seen in furniture design and glasswork, and these elements continued to endure after the design fell out of favour, eventually transforming into Art Deco.

Of the two styles, Art Nouveau is mainly remembered for its sinuous and sweeping designs, based on the captivating lyrical maiden, as seen in Alphonse Mucha's work. Furniture had a sense of romance and femininity, with stained glass and glazed panels in cabinetry adding to the decorative style. Louis Majorelle, often referred to as the 'King of Art Nouveau furniture', used exotic timbers embellished with luxurious materials, including gilt and bronze, while celebrated furniture maker Emile Gallé highlighted his cabinetry with intricate marquetry.

In terms of colours, designers took their cue from nature and embraced muted greens, yellows and brown tones, with highlights of sugared almond shades such as lilac, pink and blue. Heavily patterned wallpapers were also popular, and often featured stylised flora and fauna, together with insect and feather prints. The range of archive-inspired wallpapers available today (the collection from Liberty is a must-see) will provide a decorative feature in your scheme, should you wish to replicate the look.

If you live in a period property, you may already be the proud owner of an original Art Nouveau fire surround, with its glazed tiles, flowing curves and strong lines. However, if you want to install an authentic surround, check out local salvage fairs or reclamation yards. Art Nouveau items were largely mass-produced, which means there are still good quality pieces to be found. In terms of accessories, go for a Tiffany style lamp. An original will cost a small fortune, but there are plenty of great replicas on the market. Polished or varnished parquet floors underfoot are a great way to evoke an Art Nouveau sense of luxury, as is statement black lacquer furniture.



Art Nouveau furniture had a sense of romance and femininity thanks to sinuous, sweeping lines



Above Art Nouveau stained glass window film, from £45 per sq m, Purlfrost Window Film.

purlfrost.com

Sylvia silver luxury bed, £1,125, The French Bedroom Company. **frenchbedroomcompany.co.uk**



Clockwise from left
 Fusion bedroom chest of
 drawers, £POA,
 Hammonds Furniture.
hammonds-uk.com
 Botanica Forget-me-not roller blind, £POA,
 Direct Blinds.
directblinds.co.uk
 Art Nouveau tiled convector fireplace,
 from £1,205, Stovax.
stovax.com
 Honeysuckle and tulip wallpaper, £65
 per 10m roll, William Morris.
william-morris.co.uk





GET THE LOOK

Provençal kitchen

Be inspired by the south of France and refresh your cook zone with a chalky colour palette, distressed paint finishes and rustic tableware



GLAZED EFFECT

Colour trim jugs, priced from £25, Dickins & Jones Home at House of Fraser. 0345 602 1073, houseoffraser.co.uk

HOUSE PROUD

Housekeeper's cupboard, £150, Berry Red. 01432 274 805, berryred.co.uk



ON THE TILES

Paris tile in Isabelle, £9.95 each, Fired Earth. 0113 243 0748, firedearth.com



BON APPETIT

Wooden cutlery box, £11.95, Boutique Provençale. 0800 954 0232, boutiqueprovencale.co.uk



HEAVY METAL

French vintage wine carrier, £28, Raspberry Mash. 07583 836 988, raspberrymash.co.uk

SEATING PLAN

Aquamarine dining chair, £131, Sweetpea & Willow. 0845 257 2627, sweetpeaandwillow.com





Rated reads

Hit the books for more inspirational ideas

A Home in Provence: Interiors Gardens
Inspiration by Noëlle Duck & Christian Sarramon (£22.50, Flammarion)

French Country Living by Caroline Clifton Mogg (£12.99, Ryland Peters & Small)

The Best Loved Villages of France by Stéphane Bern (£22.50, Flammarion)

Above left Oliver metal pendant in cream, Dickins & Jones Home at House of Fraser. 0845 602 1073, houseoffraser.co.uk

Right Amelie extending dining table, £899; Amelie upholstered dining chairs, £199 each, John Lewis. 0345 6049 049, johnlewis.com

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EARN YOUR STRIPES

Grain stripe linen fabric in indigo, £39 per m, Ian Mankin. 020 7722 0997, ianmankin.co.uk



CHECK MATE

Gingham cotton fabric in heather green, £18 per m, Laura Ashley. 0871 983 5999, lauraashley.com



MELLOW YELLOW

York stripe cotton fabric in L-039, £96 per m, Fermeoie. 01672 513 723, fermeoie.com

STYLE SECRETS

● Invest in free-standing furniture and classic cabinetry, in keeping with the laid-back vibe. A butcher's block teamed with a ceramic farmhouse style sink and lantern lighting will complement the look.

● Choose natural materials to enhance the rustic ambience, such as stone floors, terracotta tiles and exposed brickwork. Team with a chalky colour palette of neutral shades, with splashes of sunshine yellow, olive green, and sky blue hues.

● Be inspired by the French way of cooking and entertaining – relaxed, passionate and full of flavour. Keep pots of herbs and edible flowers on your windowsill and don't be afraid to show off glass bottles of oil, strings of fresh garlic, jars of olives and bowls of fresh lemons. Copper pans, enamelware and ceramic jugs can also be artfully displayed on a free-standing dresser for added charm.


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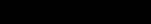
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Celebrate the spring with our favourite feathered friends

1 Raffia bird storage boxes, from £30, Berry Red. 01432 274 805, berryred.co.uk

2 Hola bird compact mirror, £8.49, Cloth-ears. 0345 259 1410, cloth-ears.co.uk

3 Katy Leigh blue flying bird plate, £24, Unique & Unity. 0845 609 9699, uniqueandunity.co.uk

4 Pigeon and jelly cushion, £60, Annabel James. 0845 548 0210, annabeljames.co.uk

5 Alpine high-back chair in Monsoon calista blue multi fabric, £989, Multiyork. 0845 303 7134, multiyork.co.uk

6 Aqua blue swallow candle, £11.50, Berry Red. 01432 274 805, berryred.co.uk

7 Bunting bird gilded ceramic lamp with shade, £129, Artisanti. 0345 259 1410, artisanti.com

8 Patterned bird mug, £9.95, Cloth Ears. 0845 519 7701, cloth-ears.co.uk

9 Wooden bird, £18, Dickins & Jones at House of Fraser. 0345 602 1073, houseoffraser.co.uk



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Bird print cushion, £25; Ned the dog
printed cushion, £25; multicoloured
cushion, £30; lamp table, £145; coffee
table, £295; Caroline sofa, £1,149, all
Dickins & Jones Home at House of Fraser.
0345 602 1073, houseoffraser.co.uk



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Make your home pretty in pink with gorgeous rose-tinted accessories

1 Wild rose dusky pink pillowcase, from £10; wild rose dusky pink duvet cover, from £32, The Secret Linen Store. 01243 606 245, secretlinenstore.com

2 Rose vacuum flask, £15.95, Berry Red. 0845 450 3937, berryred.co.uk

3 Venice glass shade, £19, Tesco Direct. 0800 323 4050, tesco.com/direct

4 Avalon two-seater sofa in rose, £700, Sofa.com. 0345 400 2222, sofa.com

5 Mongolian fur cushion, £35, BHS. 0344 411 6000, bhs.co.uk

6 Gardeners pink trug gift set, £35, Whisk Hampers. 01483 211 926, whiskhampers.co.uk

7 Retro treat pink bonbon jar, £4.99, Creative Tops. 01536 207 710, creative-tops.com

8 Abigail Ahern Maud footstool in dusty rose, £275, Sofa.com. 0345 400 2222, sofa.com



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Burning BRIGHT

Harness sunset shades and fiery hues for a home that's burning with style this May



Chelsea fixed-back sofa, £1,590, Delcor



The Secret Garden collection, from £24.99 per m, Prestigious Textiles



EDITOR'S CHOICE

Scatter cushion in Nina Campbell Pamir fabric, £65, Multiyork



Miasto chair, £399, MY-Furniture



Alwinton large sofa with fitted cover, from £1,196, Sofas & Stuff

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print, £60.71,
Urban Road





Country fair outdoor dining accessories, from £2, Sainsbury's

Colours desk lamps,
from £20, B&Q



SUNNY DELIGHT

Finn Juhl Poet sofa,
£379.99, MY-Furniture

PAINT PALETTE

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Bath rug, £78; shower curtain, £98, Arcade range at Jonathan Adler



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- Aylsham, £96 per m, Fermoie
- Bamboo, £49 per m, Morris & Co.

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- DELCOR 0191 237 1303, delcor.co.uk
- FERMOIE 01672 513 723, fermoe.com
- JONATHAN ADLER 020 7589 9563, uk.jonathanadler.com
- JUST FABRICS 0845 498 9043, justfabrics.co.uk
- MORRIS & CO. 0844 543 9500, william-morris.co.uk
- MULTIYORK 0845 303 7134, multiyork.co.uk
- MY-FURNITURE 0800 092 1636, my-furniture.co.uk
- PRESTIGIOUS TEXTILES 01274 688 448, prestigious.co.uk
- SAINSBURY'S 0800 636 262, sainsburys.co.uk
- SOFAS & STUFF 0808 178 3211, sofasandstuff.com
- THE SCANDINAVIAN SHOP 01436 673 623, scandinavianshop.co.uk
- TUISS 0800 862 0466, tuiss.co.uk
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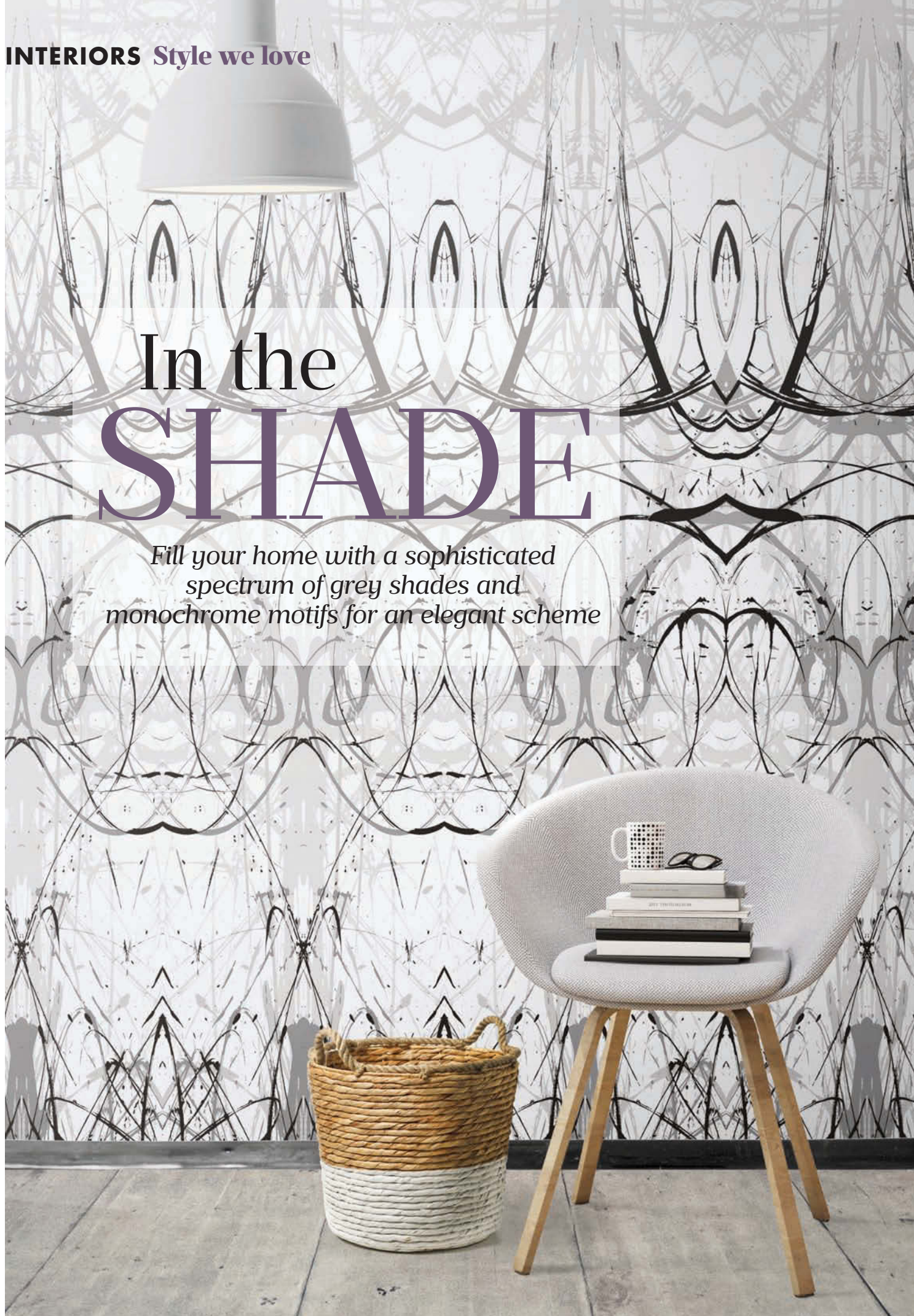
1 Cottage garden framed print, £45, Arthouse. **01706 230 077, arthouse.com** **2** Dimitri marble top cabinet, £473, Sweetpea & Willow. **0345 257 2627, sweetpeaandwillow.com** **3** Velvet cushion in olive, £26.50, Alison at Home. **020 7087 2907, alisonathome.com** **4** Nina Campbell harlequin set of four jewel bud vases, £70, English Abode. **020 7349 9500, englishabode.com** **5** Bennett footstool, £299, BHS. **0344 411 6000, bhs.co.uk** **6** Warwick floral azul sofa, £945, Alexander & Pearl. **020 8508 0411, alexanderandpearl.co.uk**

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In the SHADE

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Left Penthu wallpaper, SIMCOX collection at Milton & King. shop.miltonandking.com

Right Concrete hurricane lantern, £10; monochrome print bed linen, £18 for a double; grey shell print bed linen, from £30; framed pendant light, £40, all Sainsbury's. **0800 636 262**, sainsburys.co.uk

Below Copper apple trinket, £10; textured chenille cushion, £14; set of two metal orbs, £20; zig zag throw, £25; eco rattan pendant, £32; Malmo table lamp, £45; Alma side table, £110; set of two framed floral prints, £120; Newbury dining chair, £199 per pair, all at Next. **0333 777 8000**, next.co.uk



I have said that black has it all.
White too. Their beauty is absolute.
It is the perfect harmony.
– Coco Chanel

Seasons change and trends come and go, but classic styles always remain in vogue. This is just one of the reasons why interior designers offer a new version of monochrome chic each year. Simple and stylish, it never goes out of fashion. Black and white schemes are easy to achieve but make a bold statement, which perfectly balances drama and elegance. Whether you crave pared-back minimalism or glamorous Art Deco style, there are countless ways to channel the monochrome trend in your interiors.

If you prefer your décor to be in keeping with your period property, then tonal wallpapers in delicate, romantic prints should form the basis of your new scheme. Add a focal

point with furniture, such as a luxurious, black, wing back chair, or a striking ebony sideboard. For a contemporary twist, embrace the graphic prints, geometric motifs and clean lines that became popular during the swinging sixties.

This season, the carefully controlled palette has been lifted by a variety of accents. Copper and brass, huge trends in their own right, bring an extra dimension to black and white schemes, with metallic details changing the way light is dispersed around a room. Texture is also key, to ensure that your tonal look doesn't become bland. Play around with matte and high-gloss finishes to add interest and depth to your interiors. Concrete, another leading design feature this season, can balance

a monochrome room, providing a surprising contrast to black and white.

Such a strong look can be overwhelming, which is why it should be used with care. Black and white may work well in the animal kingdom, but stark contrasts can be hard to live with. Thankfully, this year's monochrome look embraces an array of grey shades, so cautious decorators can create a softer, subtler scheme. Grey has been hailed by interior designers as the new white, and it lends itself well to bedrooms and bathrooms, as it can ensure a calming, restful ambience. Find a shade which appeals to you and then incorporate monochrome pieces, for a chic and understated take on this timeless trend.

Frames, from £18; cushions, from £25; set of two striped baskets, £30; Rhian ceramic bulb lamp, £50; Oxford square white pillowcases, £70 per pair; striped double duvet cover set, £70; quilted grey throw, £80; Etienne bedside table, £219, all from the Linea Mono Mark collection at House of Fraser. 0345 602 1073, houseoffraser.co.uk



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Left Frame, £20; cushions, from £25; throws, £30 each; bedding, £120, all J By Jasper Conran at Debenhams.
0844 800 8877, debenhams.com



Right Grey bell lamp, £310, Rume.
01273 777 810, rume.co.uk

Bottom Left Norm 69 lampshade, £85, Normann Copenhagen at Design 55 Interiors.
01422 375 940, design55online.co.uk

Bottom Right Soda glasses, £1 each; white porcelain milk bottle, £5; black & white tea towel, £5 for five, all Tesco Direct.
0800 323 4050, tesco.com/direct



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BETTER BY DESIGN

Bespoke solutions can make life in a period house much easier says Susan Dickerson

If you love interiors as much as we do, it's thrilling to think that every piece of furniture in Britain was once handmade from the baby's cradle to the master's table. The second-best bed that Shakespeare left to Anne Hathaway would have been regarded as a designer purchase. Some Elizabethan beds could cost as much as a house and were often made to measure, such as the splendid Great Bed of Ware which you can admire in the Victoria & Albert Museum.

As furniture evolved to become beautiful as well as functional, following the Restoration in 1660, cabinetmakers and upholsterers created elegant pieces for great houses in the town and country. On hand to help with everything from window dressings to easy chairs, the first interior designers were in great demand as the fashionable experimented with designs and materials to cover beds and walls.

At the beginning of the 18th century, the best of continental designs and manufacturing blended with English joinery in what we now call the Queen Anne style. Thanks to the work of Thomas Chippendale and his skill in developing designs for his audience, the UK became renowned for its furniture making.

Today, we are spoilt for choice when decorating our homes, but there will always be a market for custom made pieces which are



The Arun dresser base in English oak and burr oak, 94"x 19"x 34", £5,995 (any size/configuration can be made to order), The Real Wood Furniture Company, 01993 813 887, rwfco.com

designed especially for you. Whatever your needs, from designing a suite of furniture for a study or recreating a piece you've admired in a stately home, Britain has an army of highly skilled craftsmen and women at your service.

BEAUTIFUL PIECES

"Commissioning furniture is not a complicated process, and with only a very basic understanding of materials and designs, it is quite possible for a homeowner to help create a beautiful thing with the help of a good designer. I find that sketching my clients' ideas back to them along with showing samples of possible finishes works incredibly well," says Rupert Bevan, famous for his work at Windsor Castle and Babington House.

Sometimes we also need to consider how we can make the best use of existing space and the experts can help us with our space planning.

Alan Borra, senior designer at Neville Johnson, says, "Many people feel that they have to move home due to not having enough rooms or storage, but what we often find when visiting clients is that there are a number of areas in the home which are just not maximised. Good design can add enormously to the usefulness and value of a client's existing house."

"By working with a bespoke furniture manufacturer, a 'home' for each item can be provided - often using areas that standard product manufacturers are unable to use. Examples of good furniture design in a period home can be furniture concepts that fit perfectly into sloped ceilings and awkward corners of the property."



Petersham side chair £525 each plus fabric. I & JL Brown. 020 7736 4141, ijlbrown.com



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Nigel Brimacombe, Reed Harris

020 7736 7511, reedharris.co.uk



Pull out the stops ▲

I want to incorporate some traditional accessories into my bathroom but I'm having trouble sourcing any. Can you help?

Certainly! At Period Features, we stock an outstanding range of quality hardware, paints and accessories for period homes and gardens. We have a huge selection of old-fashioned bathroom accessories, including toilet roll holders, towel rails and rings, enamel bathroom signs, and much more. Our ceramic cistern pulls and matching light pulls are a great way to start adding period features to your bathroom, and we have plenty to choose from, including authentic reproductions that have the durability of modern materials as well as the classic style of traditional features.

Suzy Dymock, Period Features

01538 372 202, periodfeatures.co.uk



Full steam ahead

I'm fed up with having a misty mirror after having a shower. What can I do?

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Ruth Pearl, Demista

01923 866 600, demista.co.uk

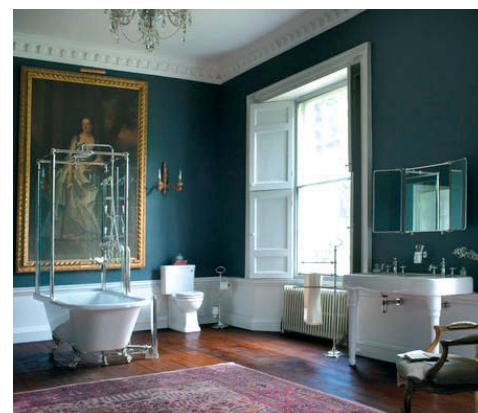
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I'm not very confident with a paintbrush, is there another way that I can introduce some colour into my bathroom?

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Phil Etherden, Albion Bath Company

01255 831 605, albionbathco.com



Test the waters

I'm looking for a shower which is in a classic style but with all mod cons. Any ideas?

The new Arcade range has been designed to bridge the gap between modern features and period design. Every Arcade piece is hand-finished with exceptional care, using the finest materials and manufacturing processes, to provide the ultimate in luxury for both traditional and contemporary schemes. The Royal free-standing over-bath shower temple is the latest addition to the collection, and boasts a technically-advanced air boost shower rose, which mixes water and air to give an invigorating spray. A durable warm nickel finish has been used throughout, which ensures that the piece will last for many years.

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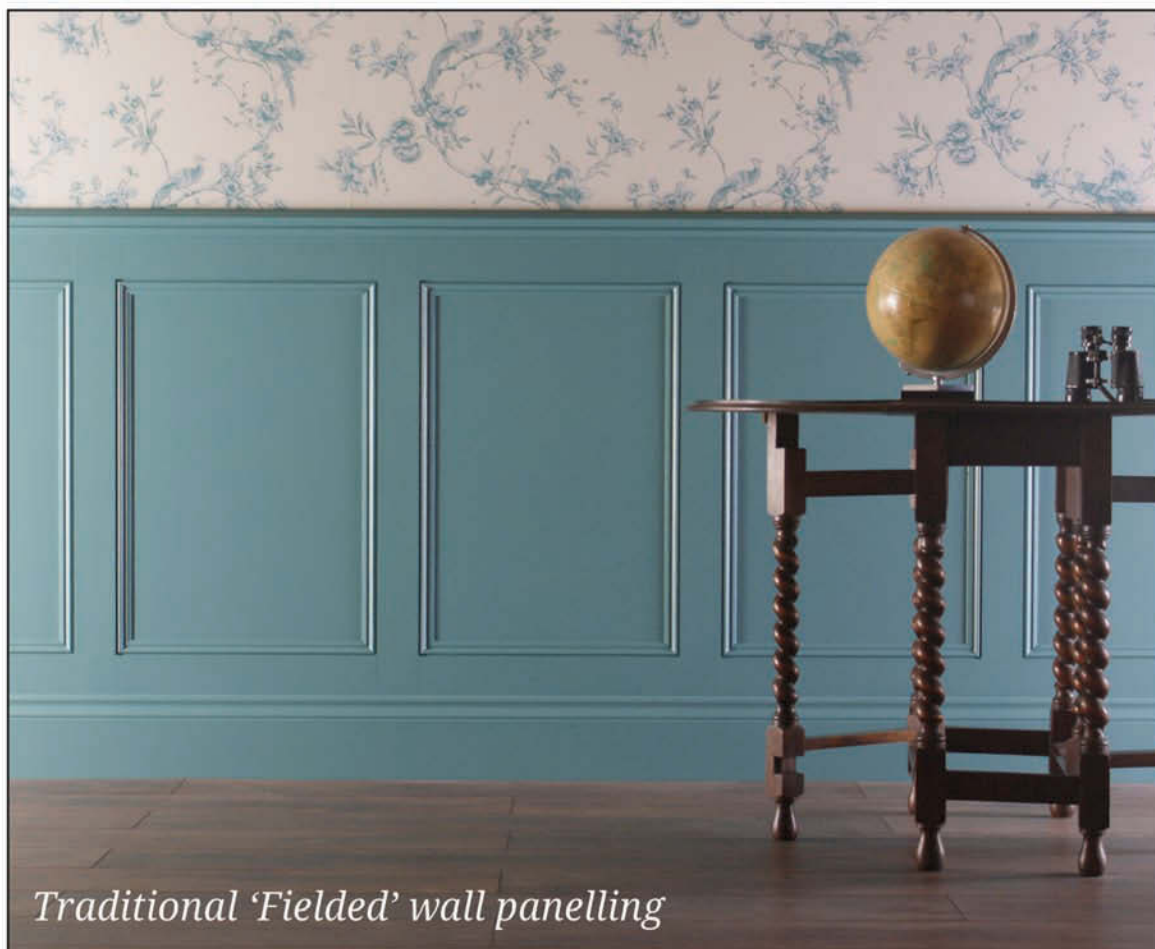
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SLEEPING BEAUTY

Keep your period boudoir up-to-date with this handy style guide

There's no bliss like your bed, and after a long day at work, or on the rare morning your sleep isn't interrupted by the jarring sound of the alarm clock, curling up under the covers is nothing short of perfection. But this relaxing retreat often needs a little TLC, and here at *Period Ideas*, we've come up with some great ways to update your boudoir, in keeping with its classic style.

IN THE FRAME

The first, and arguably most important, thing that should be considered in a bedroom revamp is the bed frame. Is it supportive enough? Does it provide adequate storage? How does it sit in relation to the rest of the room? The old faithful of bed frames, the Divan, is a classic option for any bedroom - they're widely available, affordable and not too hefty to move. Divans can stand alone as a sturdy base, or you can select a trendy headboard to match, plus, there are a wealth of different sizes and storage options to choose from that don't break the bank.

If you fancy something more traditional, bedsteads come in a variety of different sizes, styles and finishes, with fixed legs and headboards. These frames are far more decorative so you are more likely to find one to suit your scheme - whether you opt for a classic pine option, an antique four-poster, or a modern faux leather frame. With this style, you don't



Above Bronte super king size bed, £846, The English Bed Company. **0161 925 8503, theenglishbedcompany.co.uk**

Left Set of two Oxford pillowcases, from £35; Connie Coral duvet, from £99, Christy. **0845 758 5252, christy-towels.com**

Below Amelia oak bed frame, £429, Time 4 Sleep. **01484 500 560, time4sleep.co.uk**



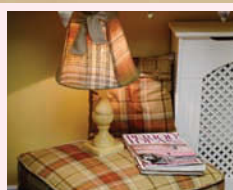
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have the added hassle of choosing and fitting a separate headboard, and there are numerous slat options available to provide a firmer or more flexible feel. Under the bed can also provide extra handy storage, but this depends on the height and size of your bed, as well as your space requirements. Alternatively, you can choose a storage bed for your room, such as an ottoman or one with drawers in the base, as these are great space-savers in smaller bedrooms and help to reduce clutter.

BETWEEN THE SHEETS

Once your bed frame is sorted, the next element to consider is your bedding. There's an abundance of pretty patterns and designs to choose from, but don't dismiss the important details, such as the thread count. The higher the thread count, the softer and more durable your sheets are considered to be, which will boost the comfort factor of your bed. While anything above 200 is considered high, 400 is generally the highest – so be sceptical of those claiming to be in the thousands.

Changing your bedding is also a great opportunity to experiment with texture. If your scheme features neutral shades, some classic ruching and pintucks are perfect for adding design detail with minimal effort, and you won't need to worry about creases. Combining different fabrics and textures in your throws, pillows and blankets also has a dramatic effect, and will bring an extra layer of luxury to your bedding.

BEDSIDE MANNER

Another way to bring added style and function to your bedroom is by investing in some trendy accessories. Stick to a classic complementary theme by investing in a matching bed set, which includes a bed frame, dresser and chest of drawers in the same style. Or, if you prefer something which has a stronger impact, go for



Four poster bed, £1,649, Raft Furniture. **020 8450 5078, raftfurniture.co.uk**



John Rocha bed, £850, Debenhams. **0844 800 8877, debenhams.com**

furniture in different designs for a more eclectic feel. This is a great way to work traditional and vintage pieces into your scheme, such as an antique bedside table or chaise lounge. The latter is a popular bedroom choice because of the added comfort it brings, as well as the luxury designs and fabrics available. Occasional chairs also make lovely bedroom features, particularly if you need to fill a bare space. So, if you're tired of your bed, your sheets or the general layout of your boudoir, there's a variety of options to choose from to shake up your scheme.

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Right Squidgel bed, £1,195. Loaf. **0845 468 0698**, loaf.com

Vintage shopping SECRETS

Seoana Sherry-Brennan shares some essential advice to help you find the perfect vintage piece

At one time, we couldn't get enough of the new. We craved the latest thing in all aspects of our lives, from fashion and food, to transport and technology. Today this unsustainable way of life has been replaced with a new ethos, and we can see a shift in the value that is placed on 'new', thanks in part to research conducted by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs. It calculated that over 280 million tonnes of waste is created each year in the UK alone, signalling a crucial need to review our shopping habits. With environmental considerations affecting how many people shop, it has become fashionable to ignore the siren call of the 'new in' notices and choose pieces from the past instead— it's time to embrace vintage.

PLAN AHEAD

Although the terms 'vintage' and 'retro' may seem interchangeable, there is a difference. Vintage refers to the period between 1920 and 1960, with anything later than that regarded as retro and anything over 100 years old classed as antique. This time span encapsulates a variety of different design eras, which is why vintage pieces can blend into any type of home

or décor. One example of a vintage style which can be used to update your home is Art Deco. Collette Riggs at Wm. Boyle (0141 429 1218, wmboyle.co.uk) tells us more. "The 1920s saw the introduction of Art Deco architecture. Bold geometric and symmetrical shapes were a common theme. A typical feature of Art Deco coving is a stepped design, and this is now a popular choice for many contemporary design schemes."

If you're keen to furnish your abode with second-hand homeware, it pays to be prepared. Firstly, track down reliable sources. Specialist vintage dealers will be pricey, but they will have an abundance of helpful knowledge, as well as a wide selection of items sourced from the UK and overseas. If you want to save money, head to your local vintage market. Don't be afraid to haggle, particularly for damaged pieces. The real bargains are to be found online, although it can be difficult to determine authenticity through a screen. If you're feeling lucky, visit local car boot sales, as there is always a chance you may find a treasure among the trash. There are urban myths about smug buyers discovering Eames lounge chairs languishing in skips by the side of the road, but don't pin your hopes on coming across your perfect piece this way.



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INDUSTRY INSIDER

Charlotte Legge at Wye Valley Reclamation (**01432 375 511, warehouse701.co.uk**), shares her advice on what to look out for when buying vintage furniture:

- Make sure it's a sturdy piece of furniture with no wobbly legs, a loose back or other unsteady features.
- Check for woodworm and treat it immediately if necessary.
- Look to see what type of fixings are used – cross head screws and stainless nuts and bolts have little history.
- An original piece will always hold its value whereas upcycled items may not.
- Always try chairs and tables together as legs get trimmed or worn away on both.

Clear acrylic pressed wine glass, £2; clear acrylic pressed pitcher, £8; ornate metal folding bistro chair, £35; ornate metal folding bistro table, £40, all Tesco Direct.
0800 323 4050, tesco.com/direct



Above Eversley Home offers a beautiful range of home furnishings and gifts, including these faux leather boxes (priced from £20), which are an ideal way to get the vintage look without the antique price tag.
01663 308 020, eversleyengland.co.uk

CHECK THE CONDITION

Furniture and home accessories made in previous eras had higher-quality materials than modern counterparts, which makes them far more durable and long-lasting – so don't hold their age against them! Every era has its fair share of poorly made pieces though, so don't assume that all vintage is top quality. Check for secure fittings and well-constructed elements; for example, if you're purchasing a vintage dresser, make sure the drawers all run smoothly.

While it is tempting to seek out the top brands of the time, it is worth considering lesser-known names too. They will be cheaper but may be just as good quality. Don't let a name sway you – if you're picking pieces based on their provenance and future value, you must also pay close attention to the finish. No one will want severely damaged furniture, no matter who made it. If you are investing in a brand, try and obtain the original sales receipts to prove the item's origin. Most timber,

ceramic and glass pieces will be signed by the artist, and furniture will have labels with the designer's name and date of manufacture.

KEEP AN OPEN MIND

The most important thing is not to focus wholly on the condition. Spot the potential – a little elbow grease can go a long way when renovating. Don't let scratches or marks put you off, slight damage is easily repaired with help from a specialist. Ugly upholstery isn't an issue either – if the bare bones of the piece are solid, you can revamp it with a brand new fabric.

A pre-loved piece may come with the occasional scratch or dent, but it also has a charm that is impossible to find in furniture straight from the factory floor. A chair isn't just a chair – it's a story; it's someone's past, woven into the fibres. Buying vintage isn't only an investment in your home; it also helps preserve our design history, and keeps alive the traditions and tales of the past.

Below Rekindle memories of cherished childhood holidays with a rocking deck chair, pictured here in Suffolk stripe. Priced at £70, Garden Trading.
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using rustic textures and
humble hues



BACK TO BASICS

- Furnish your abode in an assortment of shapes and sizes – different forms become oddly harmonious when put together, creating a trendy and eclectic style.
- Old utensils and accessories with an aged feel are perfect for achieving this barn-inspired look, so use recycled fruit crates and salvaged milk churns for a cute and cosy effect.
- Keep natural textures exposed, such as rough woods and brickwork, for an authentic farmhouse feel, or freshen up your scheme with painted surfaces in neutral shades.



1 Blind in Henny Penny linen, £40 per m, Voyage Decoration. 0141 641 1700, voyagedecoration.com 2 Blanket box, £310; five-drawer chest, £675; double sleigh bed, £695, all from the Cotswold collection at Maison. 020 8332 2337, maisonhomeinteriors.com 3 Spring floral pods picture by Catherine Stephenson, £90, Country Stile. 01507 525 871, thecountrystile.co.uk 4 Old-fashioned milk paint, £15.95, The Blueberry Store. 01799 500 117, blueberrystore.co.uk 5 Cast-iron mice, £9.95 per pair, Expressions Gifts. 01432 370 998, expressionsgifts.co.uk 6 Cream wooden dining table, £259.95, Melody Maison. 01302 711 116, melodymaison.co.uk

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- Large, cosy furniture is ideal for creating this lavish look - combine sumptuous sofas with plush cushions and hard-wood floors for a dramatic impact.
- Adorn your home in leather and tweed fabrics and deep, rich tones to create a luxurious feel, and decorate with metallic accessories to break up the soft scheme.

1 Hiding pheasant cushion, £45; Benny chair in berrydale plum, from £728, Voyage Decoration. **0141 641 1700, voyagedecoration.com** 2 Nickel-plated aluminium drip candle sticks, from £55, Carnill & Company. **01636 918 501, carnillandcompany.com** 3 Stag head lamp, £95, Within. **020 7087 2900, withinhome.com** 4 Voyage Cato stag round footstool, £155, Cotswold Trading. **01386 853 331, cotswoldtrading.com** 5 Kitchen worktop surface protectors, £29.99, Countryside Greetings. **01789 778 603, countrysidegreetings.com** 6 Herbie Hound feather-filled cushion, £22.99, The Shed Inc. **0844 409 7827, theshedinc.co.uk**

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Midsomer is painted in an off white with a solid oak frame and veneered centre panel. Complementary features include tongue and groove panelling, glass display cabinets and cream crackle drop drawer handles. Crown Imperial Kitchens cost from £10,000 01227 742 424, crown-imperial.co.uk

Rustic Charm

Bring a relaxed feel to your home with a fabulous kitchen says Susan Dickerson

Nothing evokes comfort quite like a country kitchen, so pick and choose from a variety of cabinetry and materials to make the look your own. Rustic style is undone, simple and practical, rather than the high-gloss, linear look of designer German and Italian kitchens.

As each generation rediscovers the kitchen as a multi-purpose place which can provide solace as well as hot dinners, a reinterpretation of country style can help to ground us and promote a feeling of sanctuary.

CREAM OF COUNTRY

With so much uncertainty in our daily lives, stability in the kitchen can evoke comforting memories, and the tactile nature of a wooden worktop or handles smooth to the touch can be soothing after a hard day at work or battling through rush hour traffic.

Thanks to a resurgence of interest in food, sustainable living and a more thrifty approach

to living, country has never been so relevant. The latest appliances can rub shoulders with the best of British cabinetry, whether you prefer a free-standing or more fitted look. A clever way to bring a country touch to your kitchen is by replacing your existing kitchen doors.

"You don't even have to remove your doors until your new ones arrive by courier, that way you can replace each door one by one to keep any disruption to a minimum," explains Phil Temple at Shaker2go.co.uk. "We have a guide on our website for measuring your existing doors and it explains simple hinge measuring so you can just do a straight swap without the worry of complicated alterations. You can achieve the bespoke kitchen look without the bespoke kitchen price tag, and we are here to guide you every step of the way." (Find out more on 01233 220 311 or shaker2go.co.uk).

You can choose painted units or decorate an island or butcher block yourself. The aim is to create a living kitchen where your children

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and grandchildren will do their homework at the table and you and your daughter will talk long into the night. A kitchen which inspires intimacy and companionship, and above all, warmth and tenderness. The kitchen forms the backdrop to many of our daily dramas as it is a place the whole family uses, from celebrating sports day, to the arrival of a new puppy or soothing a teenage broken heart. And, on a more prosaic level, it's where the kettle is kept!

COMFORT FIRST

Trust your instincts when visiting kitchen showrooms or looking for pieces at auction. Think about the ambience of your favourite restaurant, the colours and furniture used to encourage patrons to linger and consider how your friends' kitchens make you feel. Wooden furniture and classic proportions help to create a comforting feel.

The kitchen is a hard-working room which ease the transition from home to the outside world, where we prepare ourselves for the day ahead and regroup in the evening. It is a place to potter and unwind in, although we tend to gather around an island unit or inspect the fridge together, rather than roasting a suckling pig on a spit.

The best colour schemes are ones which make your family feel happy and secure. Look for soft chalky off-whites and warm colours for social spaces. Natural materials will age beautifully and feel pleasant to touch, so choose elements which are tactile as well as pleasing to the eye. Worktops need to be resilient, functional and handsome. Make sure they are at a comfortable height. Although furniture comes in standard shapes and sizes, human beings don't, so if you are petite, be realistic about shelving and cupboards.



4



3

2 This hand-crafted cabinetry in limewood to a bespoke design painted in 'Therasas Green' from Farrow & Ball works beautifully with timber flooring and a simple dining area in this cook zone. Kitchens are priced from £30,000 at Barnes of Ashburton. **01364 653 613, barnesofashburton.co.uk**

3 A bespoke solution can often be a brilliant idea in older period properties, especially when there are architectural elements to work with. Kitchens from Martin Moore cost from £35,000. **0845 180 0015, martinmoore.com**

4 There's nothing like an old-fashioned larder to offer ample storage in the country kitchen. The Hartham larder is priced £1,299 and you can buy similar pieces in the range at Harvey Jones. **0800 389 6938, harveyjones.co.uk**

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Sweet DREAMS



How two sisters developed a beautiful bed linen business

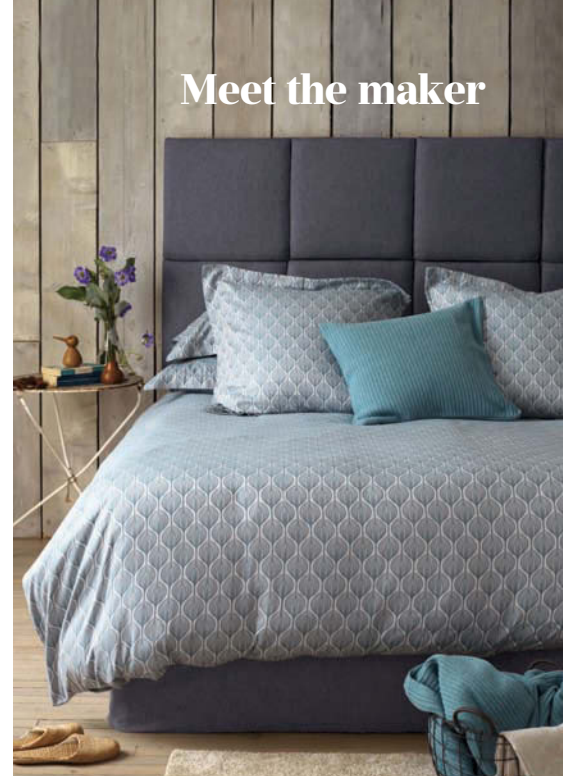


We love to celebrate family businesses here at *Period Ideas* so this month we are delighted to introduce you to sisters Molly and Harriet, who have worked together for many years. The pair have always worked in retail, in the bedroom sector, and dreamed of running their own business together, working on a brand that they could be proud of.

Molly is a textiles designer and Harriet is a marketing expert, so it made perfect sense for them to start something to combine their skills. They also share a love of bed time. "It's the best part of the day," says Molly. "I think the bedroom is a very personal space, and you deserve the best that you can afford so you can snuggle up in comfort."

QUALITY CONTROL

After making bed linen for other companies for many years, the sisters decided to go it alone, and the Secret Linen Store was born in 2013. From the outset, they knew that they wanted to be different, and stand out from the rest. They both love colour and pattern, and producing high quality linen is very important to them. Molly and Harriet were determined to make their collection affordable without compromising on quality. Lots of numbers and spreadsheets later, they realised that they could sell bed linen for up to 40% less than the high street, by selling it online only, rather than in bricks and mortar stores up and down the country,



The challenge when selling textiles online is getting across the lovely feel and colour of the bedding, so they created a sample service! It is free and easy, and ensures customers can match fabrics with curtains and accessories.

The bed linen comes in an array of finishes too. Some people like a soft feel, others prefer a crisper finish. Fortunately the Secret Linen Store has all bases covered, so you can find your perfect match.

It's amazing that we can make so many different fabrics all from a humble plant



CLASSIC COLLECTIONS

You can discover duvet covers, pillowcases, sheets, cushions and throws to freshen up your home. Look out for patterned and plain sheets and rest assured that the collections are designed to be mixed and matched. Sheets are often forgotten, but Molly and Harriet want their beautiful offerings to be cherished instead.

Their luxurious bed linen is made in a well-established factory in Portugal. The sisters spend lots of time there ensuring their linens are the best they can be, and trying new colours and patterns. "You can never predict how different yarn colours will come together," says Molly. "Making the bed linen in Europe is important so we can make sure that the quality is fantastic. All of our bed linen is finished, inspected and packed by hand. We are also keen to eliminate non-essential packaging, so our orders are picked and wrapped by hand and delivered with a few hidden surprises in paper potato sacks!"

Discover the SECRET LINEN STORE

You can enjoy a fabulous 10% off as a *Period Ideas* reader. Head to the secretlinenstore.com and enter the code SLEEPWELL, which is valid until 31st May 2015. Please note that this offer does not apply to Clearance lines. Or call the ladies on 01243 606 245 and sort out your sheets.



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Window wonders

With The Sash Window Workshop, you can restore your classic sash windows to their former glory, or indulge in a complete window makeover. This traditional one over one timber sash window is a beautiful example of the full and comprehensive service offered by the company, including draught sealing, double-glazing existing windows, and the manufacture and installation of secondary double-glazing. Call **01344 868 668** for a quotation, or visit sashwindow.com



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Peter Keane, The Natural Wood Floor Company
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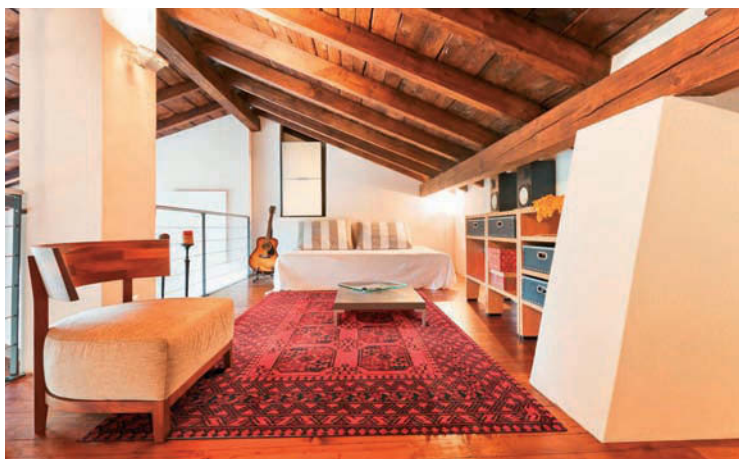


Floor filler

How do you judge a rug's quality and what are the benefits of hand-made options?

A common misconception people make is to think that a thicker rug is of a higher quality than a thinner one. It all depends on how you are going to use the rug, as good quality rugs tend to be thinner, due to the greater number of knots per square inch, but if a rug is going to get a lot of wear, it will need to have more body to last longer. In my opinion, there's no better investment than a hand-made rug, which offers what no machine-made one can – beautiful designs that have been passed down through generations of carpet weavers, as well as hand-spun wool, vegetable dyes and a natural dying process.

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On display

We've chosen to install wooden floors in our property, but aren't sure which type. Any tips?

Visiting a showroom to browse all the different materials and finishes is a great way to choose your floor. The Grangewood Floors' showroom is spread over three levels and displays over 200 styles to help you find the right wood floor for you, while our experienced staff are on hand to answer any queries. Our gallery style displays offer you the chance to see large areas of floor, giving you a much clearer vision of how your finished room will look. Our flooring products are also complemented by a full range of solid wood accessories, including skirting and architraves.

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RESTORE & ORDER

Seoana Sherry-Brennan chats to the team at Fortis & Hooke about their superior sash window restoration service

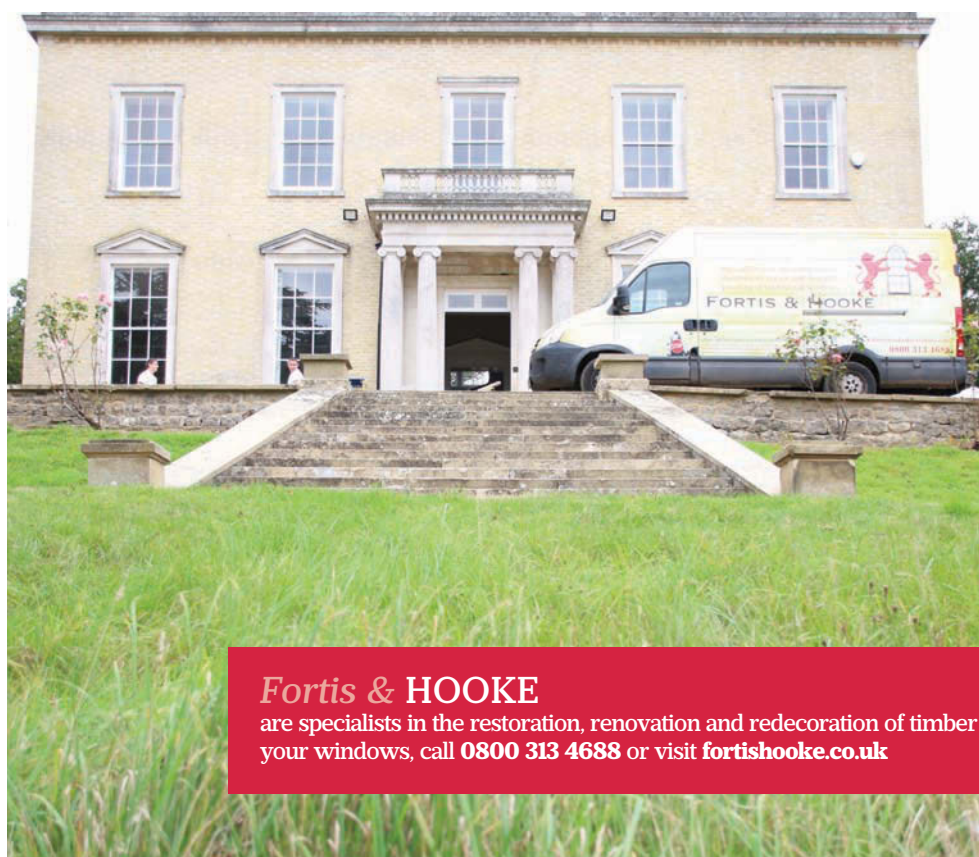
Whether it's battling the bleak British winters, or suffering from overuse during the hot summer months, our windows put up with a lot. So it's not surprising that they can fall into a state of disrepair, particularly if they are original to a period property. Thankfully, Fortis & Hooke is on hand to help. Using tried and tested methods that have been fine-tuned through many years of experience, it helps to restore traditional sash windows to their former glory.

BRIGHT FUTURE

Pieter Booyse, director of Fortis & Hooke, explains exactly what the restoration process involves. "We begin by removing the original sashes from the sash boxes and replacing them with temporary look-alike sashes. The original sash is then taken to our workshop where, using both modern and traditional techniques, we refurbish all mechanical parts and install draught-sealing systems. We then strip the original sashes of any old paint or decoration and

redecorate with an oil-based, flexible paint. The restoration process is then completed by refitting the sashes into a fully renovated, repaired and decorated frame."

The benefits of this sophisticated system are two-fold. As well as providing you with windows that look fabulous, move well and are more heat efficient, any underlying issues that could cause further damage in the future are resolved. This ensures that your revamped windows will last for many years to come.



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are specialists in the restoration, renovation and redecoration of timber sash windows. For a no-obligation survey of your windows, call **0800 313 4688** or visit **fortishooke.co.uk**

WELL PRESERVED

Fortis & Hooke is passionate about restoration over replacement, and will do everything it can to preserve original features. "The old adage 'they don't make them like they used to' is something we can demonstrate on a daily basis," says Pieter. "Original windows were made with well-seasoned timber, which withstands the elements much better than newer timber substitutes. It is therefore our opinion that a well-restored sash window is much more capable of providing longevity than a replacement unit."

"We do fit new sashes into existing frames if a full upgrade is completely necessary, or preferred by the home owner. Our team of expert joiners can replace sashes with new hardwood versions that match the style of the original window. However, we believe that replacement should be a last resort, so we always suggest restoration as the first option."

The company also feels strongly about our English heritage, and believes that in order to respect this, original features should be retained. Windows are a crucial part of our country's history, as they provide us with a glimpse into the past, to a time when sashes were still handmade with great care and precision.

CHECK MATE

Retaining the original timber windows of your property is also environmentally friendly, according to a study conducted by Greenpeace in 1998. It found that sustainably sourced timber uses less energy, contributes less to greenhouse gas levels, uses fewer non-renewable resources and generates less waste than modern counterparts. Fortis & Hooke uses only FSC certified timber, which is obtained from sustainable sources, when restoring windows.

Once your windows and frames have been restored, the company will run a final check to ensure the sashes are mechanically sound. After that, the team will install a specialist perimeter sealing system, which guarantees that all aspects of your windows are draught proof. As well as reducing the amount of cold air let in by gaps, sealing the sashes has many other benefits, including reducing external noise levels, improving insulation and eliminating rattles. Authentic beading is used as part of the service, which is carefully chosen so that it matches the original beading as closely as possible. As a result, you'll be left with harmonious, well-constructed sash windows that will complement your original period features and last a lifetime.



Fortis & Hooke is passionate about restoration over replacement, and will do everything it can to preserve original features

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For more details on the full range of plant supports, call **01773 550 495** or visit leanderplantsupports.co.uk



For a wealth of pretty and practical garden accessories, such as this Oxford teak bench, call **01283 722 722** or head to gardenbenches.com



Find out more about contemporary and traditional verandas by calling **0800 179 9085** or head to nationwidelttd.co.uk



Bring some charm into your garden with the wide selection of outdoor buildings at HSP Garden Buildings. Call **01638 583 814** or visit hspgardenbuildings.com

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Discover glorious ways to furnish your garden with this handy guide

If you prepared your garden for the growing season earlier this year, now is the time to adorn it with accessories that complement your luscious foliage. With blushing spring blooms setting the scene for the long summer ahead, add a few finishing touches to your garden to make it a natural extension of your home – the perfect place to relax, socialise and soak up the sun.

SEAT CHIC

Garden furniture needs to serve multiple purposes, providing comfort and style in your outdoor space. A traditional bench ticks all of these boxes. This classic feature is effortlessly stylish and will sit seamlessly among your greenery for many seasons to come. Garden Benches' Oxford teak bench boasts an ornate cross-weave back, with room for up to three people to enjoy the summer sunshine, while the natural water resistant oils found in the wood

help to protect it from outdoor elements, so you won't need to worry about wear and tear.

Make sure you position your furniture out of reach of climbing plants and awkward branches, as these can cause damage if left unattended. You can prevent these plant problems with simple supports which control the direction of growth. At Leander Plant Supports, there's a variety of options for propping up single leaning stems, or grouping together invasive plants. In particular, Leander's beautiful rusted iron rose baskets are perfect for supporting weak-stemmed varieties, and stops them from intruding on other areas, such as patios, climbing frames and outbuildings.

COVER UP

Adding an outdoor building to your garden is also a great way to make use of this extra space. Verandas are particularly effective, and enable you to enjoy the fresh air and scenery of your

outdoors, while remaining safely undercover.

Ideal for patio and dining areas, verandas combine comfort with modern technology, such as the contemporary verandas at Nationwide Home Innovations. With integrated lighting, sliding glass doors, automatic sun screens and roof blinds, you can modify the mood of your evening, while regulating airflow and sun exposure at the click of a button.

Or, if rustic textures are more up your street, wooden decking provides a great platform for dining and socialising in the elements, without the uneven, damp ground to contend with. Even when the weather isn't ideal, you can use decking oil from Rustins (rustins.co.uk) to improve your decking's slip resistance, so you can safely step outside in wetter months. It contains UV absorbers and biocide to protect the oil from mould and will allow the natural beauty of the wood to show, so you can keep your decking stylish and safe all year round.

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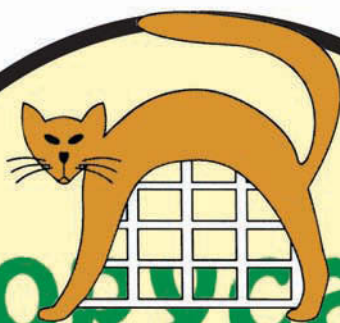
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Steel windows restored by Fabco Sanctuary.
01903 718 808, fabcosanctuary.com

Timber windows manufactured by The Sash Window Workshop.
01344 868 668, sashwindow.com



Bright Outlook

As the nights get shorter and the days become lighter, make sure you're enjoying the extra sunlight by refurbishing your windows

During the winter months, we tend to focus on how best to cover our windows to keep out draughts and create a warm, cosy atmosphere in our homes. Little attention is paid to the panes and frames themselves, as we try our best to ignore the bleak view outside. But while we may have been neglecting our windows, the British weather hasn't. Thanks to endless rain showers and harsh winds, original features may be in desperate need of restoration or replacement. If the exterior of your period property requires a bit of TLC, read on to see what our experts have to say.

WELL PRESERVED

In the case of timber windows, unprotected wood will swell or rot over time, resulting in draughty windows that either rattle or stick. While it may seem that replacement is the only solution for damaged windows, repair is actually far cheaper, and can be easily done by a skilled joiner or window restorer. Older timber is far more durable than modern alternatives, so period windows often survive much longer than their successors, which is why it is worth trying

to preserve them if possible. Decayed or damaged timber can be cut out and replaced with new sections of wood, which can be treated to both withstand bad weather and seamlessly match the existing frame or sill.

If repair isn't an option, it is vital that any replacements blend in with the style of your period property. Richard Dollar, managing director of traditional timber window and door specialist The Sash Window Workshop, explains more. "It is a priority for most people who own a period property to maintain the original character and charm of their home. Sympathetic treatment and matching windows and doors is absolutely essential in maintaining this character, especially when looking to upgrade. At The Sash Window Workshop, we manufacture timber windows and doors to suit our customers' individual requirements. With over 20 years' experience in sympathetically tailoring windows to match our clients' homes, we are considered the leading expert in our field."

As well as retaining the historical integrity of your home, refurbishment will minimise external noise levels, improve insulation, and reduce any draughts or rattles.

REAL STEEL

Metal windows are also common in period homes, but they come with their own set of problems, including rust, discolouration and broken hinges and fittings. Unlike timber, there are solutions which you can try without the help of an expert, such as using a wire brush to gently remove any rust or flaking paint.

If more in-depth repairs are needed, Fabco Sanctuary Ltd specialises in steel windows for period, bespoke and contemporary designs. Aesthetically pleasing, security conscious and environmentally friendly, their windows meet the most discerning expectations in performance and authenticity. Whatever the style of your home, Fabco will work in conjunction with you to ensure the desired finish is achieved.

In the majority of cases, window replacements or repairs will not require planning permission. The only instance when it is necessary is if the building is listed, or within a Conservation Area. Consent will then be needed from the local authority, and any replacements will need to comply with energy-efficiency laws.

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Give your home a grand entrance by crafting a stylish door stopper

We seldom think about how our doorstop can contribute to our interior scheme, but with this simple sewing project, it's easy to have one that's brimming with style. Brightening up high-traffic areas with quirky accessories is a great way to make a plain space stand out. You can choose from a selection of pretty fabrics to make this handy door accessory match your existing décor, or, if you fancy something more vibrant, go for bold, bright shades to give your entrance a striking burst of colour. This way, anyone crossing your threshold won't miss your impressive home handiwork.



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YOU'LL NEED:

- Upholstery or quilting weight fabric: main body, 20cm x 51cm; top and bottom, 15cm sq x 2; handle, 11cm x 21cm
- Medium-weight fusible interfacing
- Matching thread
- Heavy-weight filling, 1.5-2kg
- Toy stuffing
- Tailor's chalk or disappearing ink pen

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STEP-BY-STEP

1 Cut and apply fusible interfacing to the wrong side of each fabric piece, following the manufacturer's instructions. To make the handle, fold along the length of the handle fabric piece, right-sides together, and machine stitch along the longest edge with a 1.5cm seam allowance.

2 Turn the handle right side out, with the seam lying along the middle and press. Topstitch carefully along each of the long edges. To attach, take the top and bottom fabric pieces and mark a 1.5cm seam allowance along each edge. Where the lines intersect at the corners, cut out the 1.5cm square that is created.

3 Taking the top fabric piece, position the handle in place across the centre (with the seam of the handle pointing down), aligning the ends of the handle with the edge of the fabric, and pin in place. Stitch each end in place with a 3cm square of stitches, starting 2cm from the raw edge, then sew diagonally inside the square to create a cross through the centre to fully secure the handle.

4 Next, place the main body fabric wrong side up, with the long edges at the top and bottom. Draw a line 1.5cm from each of the four edges. Starting from the left-hand 1.5cm line, draw three vertical lines, 12cm apart, across the width of the fabric, creating four sections to the main body fabric, with a 1.5cm border. As with the top and bottom pieces, cut away each corner that has been created by drawing on the lines.

5 Where the vertical lines intersect the border lines at the top and bottom, make a tiny cut using small scissors, stopping just before the border line is reached (so less than 1.5cm). Next, fold the fabric in half, right sides together and sew along the 1.5cm border line.

Hold up

If you're planning to use your make to prop open an exterior door, choose a heavier weight fabric, or an oil-cloth material that can be wiped clean of rain or mud. Consider what you will fill it with too, as certain materials won't be suitable, such as rice, which will expand.

6 To attach the top and bottom, take the top piece (with the handle attached), and with right-sides facing, place inside the main body piece and align the edges. Using the small snips as a guide, match the four sides of the top piece to the four sides of the main body and pin in place.

7 Stitch around the four sides, using the marked lines as a guide to the seam allowance. Before each corner, sew diagonally across the corner of the cut-out squares before continuing with the next side. Repeat this process with the bottom piece, ensuring right sides are facing inwards, but in the middle of one of the sides, leave an 8cm hole not sewn, for turning the doorstep right side out and filling.

8 Turn the doorstep right side out through the 8cm hole. Feed toy stuffing into the doorstep until half full. Using a funnel or spoon, fill with heavy filling, such as play sand, until the doorstep weighs at least 1.5kg. Close the doorstep by hand stitching tightly to prevent any leaking.



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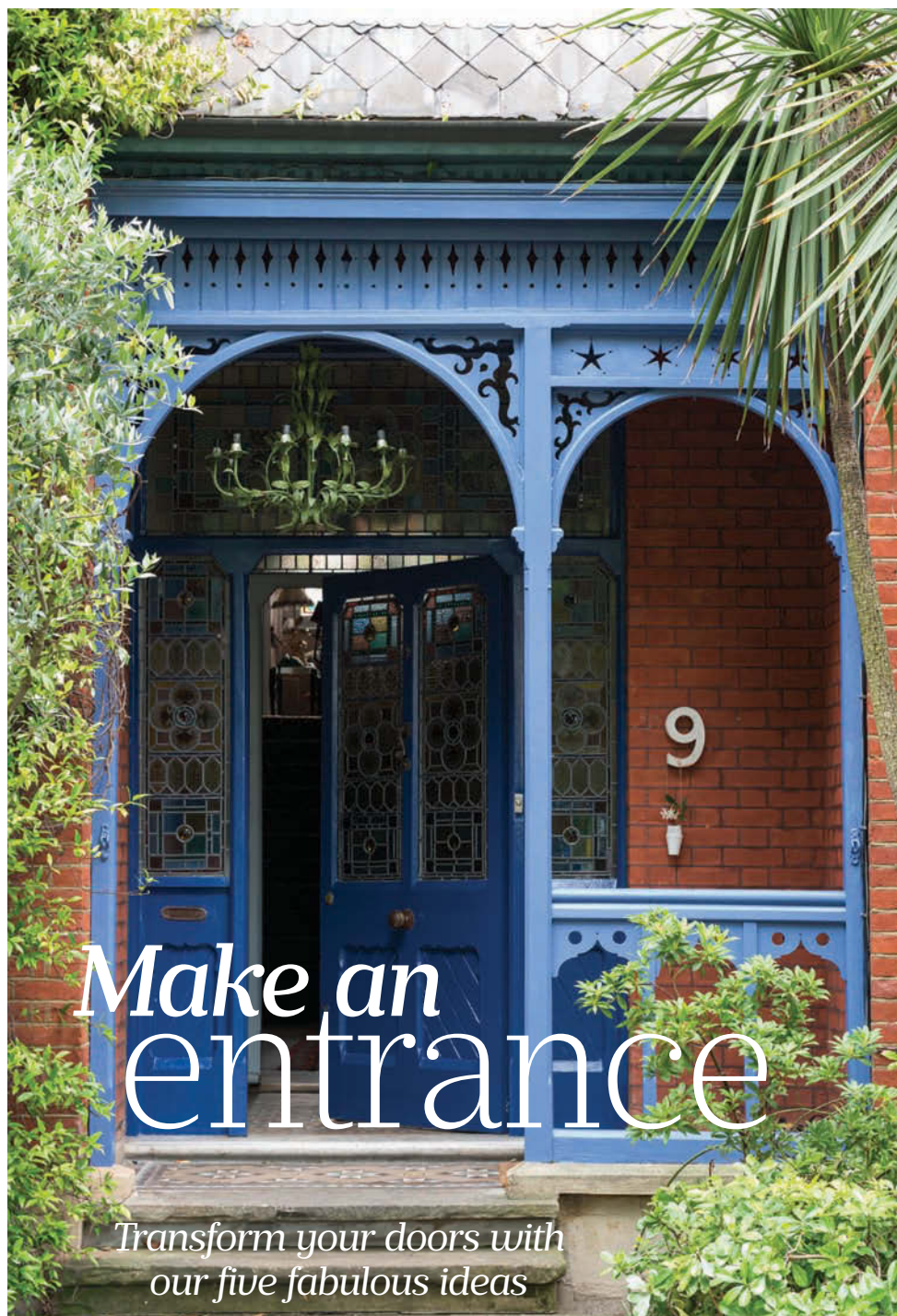
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Make an entrance

Transform your doors with our five fabulous ideas

4|STICK TOGETHER

For an affordable and easy way to customise your doors, try a quirky sticker. Available in a variety of motifs, you can alter the way your door looks in an instant. Botanical prints and birds are huge this season, and will create a new statement feature in your home. Birdie Sings door sticker, £22, PIXERS. 020 7617 7545, pixersize.com



1|TRUE COLOURS

Whether you wish to give your front door a face lift or spruce up interior doors, a splash of colour will make a big difference. Farrow & Ball has a range of paints for all areas of your abode, enabling you to revamp your doors with the flick of a paintbrush. Drawing Room Blue, £58 for 2.5l of exterior eggshell, Farrow & Ball. 01202 876 141, farrow-ball.com



2|UNDER THE RUG

If you don't want to break the bank, a door mat is a cost-effective way to update your doorway. There are a huge array of designs and shapes available, including customisable options that allow you to add your own greeting. Moose doormat, £29.04, Cats On Apple Trees. de.dawanda.com/shop/catsonappletrees



3|FULL CIRCLE

Incorporate the beauty of nature into your doors with a floral wreath. Whether it's fresh or faux, it will brighten up any doorway. £34.95, House of Bath. 0871 230 0867, houseofbath.co.uk



5|GET A GRIP

Investing in some statement door furniture is a great way to make your entrance distinctive. Make sure yours is both pretty and practical by taking a look at the award-winning range at Finesse Hardware. It has recently relaunched its website, so you can now easily browse its vast collection of fine pewter hardware, including over 40 new designs. 01207 500 050, finessedesign.com

HOME HIGHLIGHTS FOR MAY
EDITOR'S CHOICE

Make the most of your home with our selection of products, ideas and expert advice



LUXURY LOUNGING

Willow & Hall's beautiful collection of sofa beds, sofas and beds is available in a large selection of fabrics and leathers, such as this stylish duck egg textured chenille, shown here on the Downton sofa bed, priced from £1,180. For further details call **0845 527 7459** or visit **willowandhall.co.uk**

FLORAL FANCY

Dine in style with the new Charming Bluebells range from Maxwell & Williams. Featuring a delicate floral design and fluted edges, the set is the latest addition to the popular Cashmere collection, and is available as plates, bowls, cups and saucers, tea cups and more. Or, invest in a 16-piece dinner set for £150. **020 8200 5100**, **maxwellandwilliams.co.uk**



FINE AND DANDY

Finepanel's easy-fit primed wall panelling is now available in a wider fielded style, with internally-mitred decorative softwood mouldings. Loved by Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian designers, traditional fielded panels add charm to any period interior. Discover more by calling **01892 544 228** or head online to **finepanel.co.uk**

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0800 587 7645, amara.com



Gold bookends, £41.50, Astella Hrela.
07513 650 084, astellahrela.com



Candle holder, £28, Abigail Ahern at Debenhams
0844 800 8877, debenhams.com

BLOOMING LOVELY

Brighten up your abode with an eye-catching floral cushion. This embroidered design features a range of glorious spring hues and pretty pink piping – guaranteed to bring the spring to your sofa or bed.

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BASKET CASE

From storing your magazine collection to keeping the living room tidy, baskets are always handy home accessories. If your favourite basket has seen better days or you want to invest in more, check out Coates English Willow. It specialises in bespoke willow baskets, made by skilled craftsmen from willow grown on its Somerset farm. Get in touch with the team by emailing info@englishwillowbaskets.co.uk

FORGE AHEAD

Celebrate French design with the beautiful furniture at Blacksmith Le Forgeron. Each piece is crafted by hand in the company's Welsh workshop, using traditional techniques that founder, Nicolas Prevoust, learned whilst at French Blacksmithing school. **07870 892 544**, blacksmithleforgeron.co.uk



PRETTY IN PINK

Refresh your interiors with the new range of colours at B&Q. Inspired by this season's on-trend pastel tones, the cool feminine hues really pop when contrasted with industrial, chrome features, such as this stylish desk lamp, priced at £16. **0333 014 3098**, diy.com

ONE OF A KIND

Hunting for affordable bespoke furniture? Look no further than the new Miasto range at My-Furniture. The collection, which is all hand-crafted in the UK, includes an armchair and two-seater sofa, which are both available in seven chic shades. Prices start from £599.99, call **0800 092 1646** or click on my-furniture.co.uk to find out more.

BURNING DESIRE

Nu-Flame produces a range of gas fires that combine industry-leading efficiencies with stylish aesthetics. Its glass fronted range has models with up to 90% efficiency or, for those who prefer the look of an open fire, the firm has models with efficiencies of 74.4%. Call **020 8254 6802** or visit nu-flame.co.uk for more information.



BRIGHT AND BREEZY

Nothing embodies spring quite like daffodils, which is why we love the new collection at Moorcroft. Designer Kerry Goodwin's floral creation evokes the enchanting atmosphere of a clear spring day. Spring Breeze is available from the Moorcroft Heritage Visitor Centre, call **01782 820 500** or email enquiries@moorcroft.com for further details.



Regular articles from our PERIOD IDEAS experts

Benefit from the breadth of knowledge, advice, experience and guidance that our regular experts share with us every issue! With their help you can refresh your interiors and create stylish and classic decorating schemes. We'll also ensure that your outside space is just as beautiful with the latest gardening news.

Antiques & Vintage



historical homes. Her column combines practical tips with the best advice from specialists at auction houses nationwide.

MARGARET POWLING is one of Britain's best-loved antiques experts. She began collecting as a child and has a life-long love of fine china, beautiful books and

Homes & Renovating



the property ladder, she will help you care for your period house from making an offer to renovating, moving and selling.

KATE FAULKNER is famous for her honest and direct approach to renovating and property buying. Drawing from her own experiences on

Gardens & Special Offers



her East Sussex farm since 1999. Every month she will reveal her top planting advice and share a fantastic offer.

SARAH RAVEN is the queen bee of the British gardening scene. She has been running cooking, flower arranging, growing and gardening classes at

BRITAIN'S HERITAGE *Glaze over*

LUST FOR LUSTRE

Collectables

Margaret Powling discovers precious metals as she explores the history behind lustreware

Collectables

Lustreware is a decorative ceramic glaze that gives a surface a shimmering, iridescent finish. It was first developed in the 18th century by English potters, who used it to create a range of decorative items, from vases to plates. Margaret Powling, an expert in antiques and vintage items, explores the history behind lustreware and how it was used to create a range of decorative items.

COLOUR CORRECTION

Spice up your interior with the best in colour correction. Margaret Powling, an expert in antiques and vintage items, explores the history behind lustreware and how it was used to create a range of decorative items.

LAST WORD Bricks & mortar

KATE FAULKNER **LESSONS I'VE LEARNED**

Our property expert explains how to make a period home eco-friendly

Lessons I've Learned

Kate Faulkner, a property expert, shares her top tips for making a period home eco-friendly. She discusses the importance of energy efficiency and how to incorporate sustainable materials into your renovation project.

OUTDOOR IDEAS *Perfect produce*

GARDEN GOSSIP

Sarah Raven

The queen bee of the British gardening scene reveals her planting advice for the month and shares a fantastic offer with you

Perfect produce

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Competitions and giveaways are open to all UK residents aged 18 or over, excluding employees or agents of the associated companies and their families. One entry per person. The prizes detailed in each competition/giveaway cannot be exchanged for goods, or towards the purchase of goods at any retail outlet. Postal entries must be on the coupon provided. Prizes cannot be exchanged for cash, or replaced if lost or damaged. Illegible entries and those that do not abide by these terms and conditions will be disqualified. Prizes must be taken as stated and cannot be deferred. The decision of the judge is final and no correspondence will be entered into. CLOSING DATE: 8th May 2015. Winners will be notified by phone, post or email. A list of winners will be available in writing on request from:
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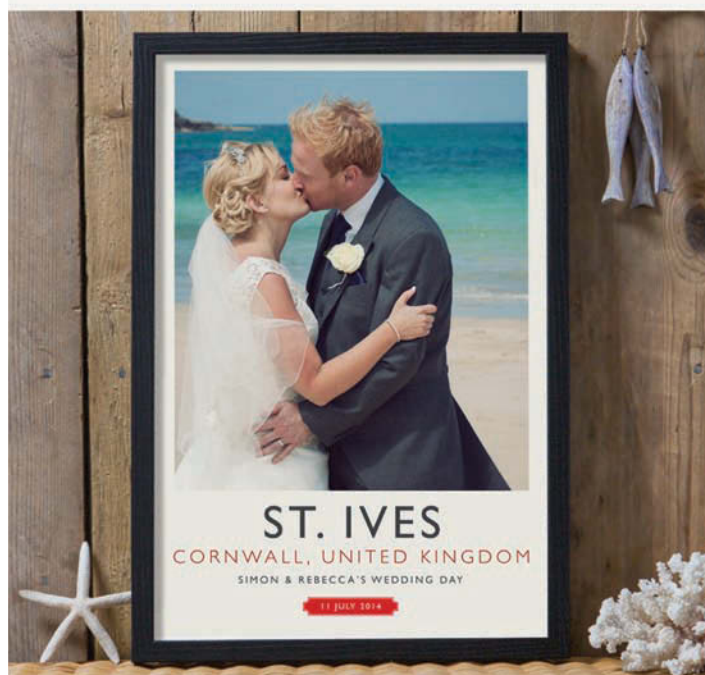
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June issue

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0844 800 8877, debenhams.com

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Bathrooms

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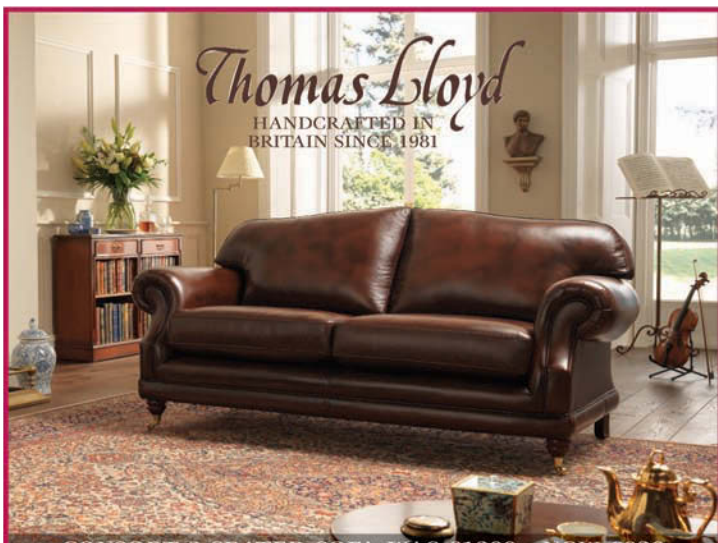
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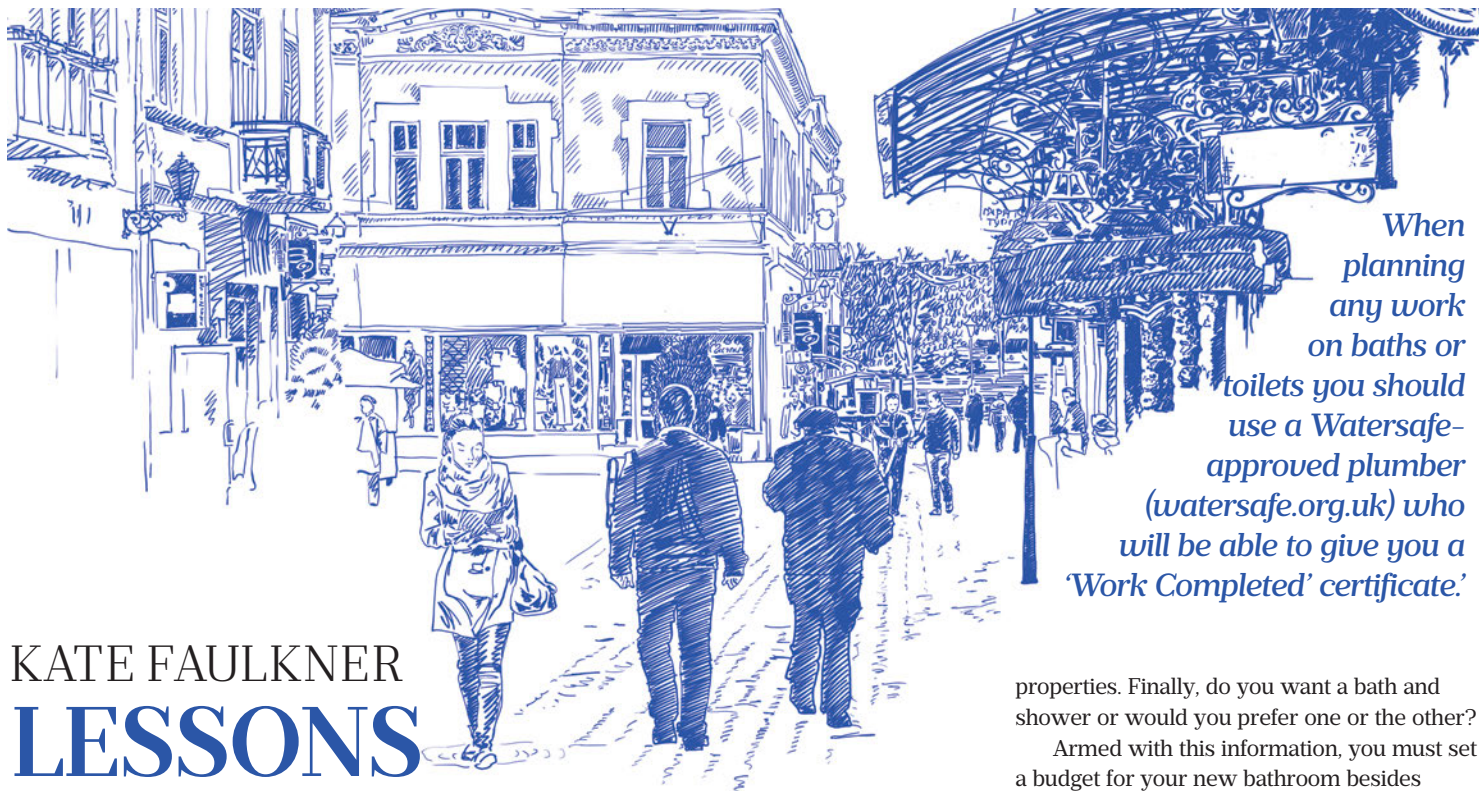
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KATE FAULKNER LESSONS I'VE LEARNED

Property expert Kate Faulkner discusses the challenges of installing extra bathrooms



Creating an extra bathroom can be tricky in a period home. When I did it in a 200 year old cottage, we had to work out how the plumbing actually worked – after so many people had updated it! But if it is done well, an additional bathroom could add over 10% to your home's value – making it much more attractive to buyers.

You may have the option of converting a spare bedroom into a bathroom, rather than building a new bathroom as part of an extension, say, or a loft conversion, but see if losing a room will devalue the property more than adding a bathroom. Using existing space is likely to be cheaper than expanding your property's footprint, so explore this first.

The first thing to do is work out where existing waste and water pipes are, so you can see where a bathroom/en suite could go. Usually, if there's a bathroom or kitchen above, below or next to where you are thinking of siting the bathroom, then it should work, though it might mean replacing a lot of the plumbing to make it happen. Sometimes it won't be cost-effective to use standard waste

disposal methods, particularly in hard-to-reach areas, such as lofts. You'll need to consider macerators instead, which are quite practical and much quieter than earlier models!

If you're adding another bedroom upstairs, see if you can create a bathroom or en suite. And if you're planning a downstairs extension and only have one bathroom, then you could include a small cloakroom. This will ease pressure on your main bathroom and may still add value to your home.

When planning a new bathroom, work out the intended height and width of the walls, the length and width of the floor and check where the current plumbing, pipes and stopcock are. Then you'll have to decide which electrics are required and find out from your electrician if you need any bonding to meet new Building Regulation requirements. Establish whether there is a gas supply or if the shower needs to be electric.

Decide what kind of flooring you want, perhaps influenced by existing materials and don't forget to consider how the room will be ventilated. Is there a window? Or will you need to install an electric fan or vent? Damp and mould can quickly build up in period

properties. Finally, do you want a bath and shower or would you prefer one or the other?

Armed with this information, you must set a budget for your new bathroom besides building, plumbing and electrical work. Prices can vary dramatically, according to the quality of the suite and fittings. Period fittings come in cast iron, enamelled steel, ceramic or acrylic, steel/enamel being the most expensive. If you can wait for the sales, you can save on last year's fashions but aim to buy either a contemporary or traditional suite, not something in the middle.

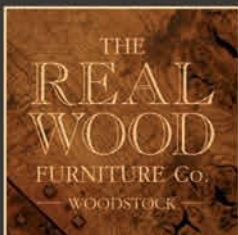
The shower is the most important fixture. It's vital to establish the type you want and what will work best for the situation; a shower in a loft may need a pump, and in some cases an electric shower might be best as it puts less pressure on your boiler. A thermostatic control is dearer but you don't get a blast of cold water when someone runs the dishwasher! Finally, get a shower that has all its working parts on the outside. That way, you don't have to tear off tiles to access parts if things go wrong.

However you approach your new project, always employ professional tradesmen to do the work. There are regulations when it comes to connecting up baths and toilets, and ideally you should use a Watersafe-approved plumber (watersafe.org.uk) who'll give you a 'Work Completed' certificate. You'll need a 'Part P' registered electrician to connect up water, electrics and gas, and choosing a member of an approved organisation such as NAPIT (napit.org.uk) ensures that the work carries a guarantee. With a bit of planning and use of qualified tradesmen, adding a new bathroom can improve your quality of life and add value to your home.

KATE FAULKNER katefaulkner.co.uk

Kate is one of the UK's leading residential property experts. She writes *Which?* Property books and regularly appears on the BBC and ITV news as well as Radio 4 and 5live. Find out more at propertychecklists.co.uk

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